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Prayers and Meditations on the Life of Christ

NIHIL OBSTAT

Gulielmus Canonicus Gildea, S.T.D., Censor Deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR

✠ Franciscus Archiepis. Westmonast.



VERA EFFIGIES THOMÆ DE KEMPIS AD VIVUM

Prayers and Meditations
on the
Life of Christ

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE TEXT OF THE EDITION

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CIVIL SERVICE

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.
DRYDEN HOUSE, GERRARD STREET, W.
1908

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

CONTENTS

TREATISE I

PART I

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS ON THE LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, AND UPON THE BENEFITS WROUGHT BY HIM FOR US, WITH THANKSGIVING THEREFOR

CONTENTS

PART II

OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

CONTENTS

TREATISE II

PRAYERS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION, DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS

PART I

CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, AND HIS APPEARANCES

PART II

OF THE ASCENSION, OF PENTECOST, AND OF CERTAIN OTHER MATTERS

INTRODUCTION

IN his dedication[1] of the first English translation of this book, "To the Verie Venerable, His most honored deare Lady Marie Tredway First Abesse of Sion. Canonesses Regulars of S. Augustins Order established at Paris. And to her vertuous daughters," the Rev. "Thomas Carre" (for forty years their chaplain) wrote thus: "I tooke the libertie in the year 1636. To addresse unto you the *following of Christ* under the name of Thomas of Kempis your brother: where I told you that if that truth should chance to be contested you should rather use prescription then processe &c. . . . I now returne to you againe with another present of the same Authour and brother, which is contested by none."

[1] Written in 1663, shortly after the parliament of Paris had adjudged Thomas à Kempis to be the undoubted author of the "Imitation of Christ."

The words "contested by none" are perhaps stronger than one would nowadays care to use; but the matter is one which cannot be fitly discussed in a short introduction like the present. Those who are curious about it will find it exhaustively treated by Dr. M. J. Pohl, in an essay[1] published in 1895, and at pages 385 to 397 of his edition of the text.

I shall here take the question of authorship for granted, and shall confine myself to setting out a few facts about Thomas à Kempis which may possibly be of interest to those using a book so much more subjective in its form than the "Imitation"; and to a brief account of former translations of it into English.

Thomas à Kempis was so called from Kempen,[2] the place of his birth. His family name was

[1] "Ueber ein in Deutschland verschollenes Werk des Thomas von Kempen" (Kempen, A. Wefers'sche Druckerei).

[2] Kempen (Rhein) is a small town, lying about fifteen miles north-west from Düsseldorf, in one of the patches of territory between the Rhine and the Meuse formerly belonging to the archiepiscopal principality of Cologne. It is now included in Rhenish Prussia, has a population of about six thousand souls, and is an important railway junction. "Kempen" and "Kempis" are variants of the same word. In Germany and Holland, during the Middle Ages, place-names ending in *e* and *en* were latinized by changing those endings into *is*. The *is* does not appear to have been inflected; and both in documents written in Latin, and in ordinary speech, either form, *e.g.*, "Kempen" and "Kempis," seems to have been used indiscriminately.

Haemerken.[1] His parents (John and Gertrude) were in humble circumstances. He was born in 1380, and had a brother, John, fifteen years older than himself. Soon after his birth his brother left Kempen, and a few years later joined the "Brotherhood of the Common Life"[2] at Deventer. When

[1] The Latin form of the name is "*Malleolus*"; englished it would be "Little-hammer." John Haemerken the elder is believed to have been a worker in metal, and he was probably also known as John Hamer. In the monastery chronicles Thomas's elder brother is not called Haemerken, but is referred to as "John Hamer," "John Hamer de Kempis," "John a Kempis," "John Kempis," or "John Kempen."

[2] The "Brotherhood of the Common Life," founded by Gerhard Groot, was approved by Pope Gregory XI in A.D. 1376. Its principles were that, although its members should not be bound by perpetual vows, they should live in obedience and chastity, should have everything in common, should earn their own livelihood, and should spend their leisure in prayer and in works of charity. When dying (of the plague) in 1384, Gerhard Groot named Florentius Radewyn as his successor, and advised the adoption by the Brotherhood of the rule of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, with a condition that those only should be admitted to the Order who were prepared to work for their living. Effect was given without delay to these instructions; and in 1387 a monastery was founded at Windesheim, a place lying about four miles to the south of Zwolle (the now chief town of the province of Overyssel) in the diocese of Utrecht. Two new Houses and one already existing Augustinian foundation soon placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the Prior of Windesheim; and in A.D. 1395 the Windesheim community was by Pope Boniface IX constituted an auto-

Thomas was in his thirteenth year he also left home and went in search of his brother. What befell him shall be told in his own words:

"When I reached Deventer, whither I had gone in order to pursue my studies, I asked my way to the house of the Canons Regular at Windesheim. There I found my brother. He advised my going to Master Florentius, Curate of the Church at Deventer, a devout and much revered priest, whose good report, spread throughout the Upper Provinces, had already drawn me to love him. . . . When I presented myself before this reverend father he welcomed me at once, kept me of his charity for a while in his own house, placed me at school, and provided me with the books which he thought I needed. Afterwards he found me a

nomous congregation, to which convents in other dioceses might associate themselves. The Augustinian canons of Holland, Germany, and the north of France largely availed themselves of this permission, with the result that, by the absorption of existing foundations, and the establishment of new (of which Agnetenberg was among the chief), the Windesheim congregation numbered in the early days of the sixteenth century more than eighty affiliated Houses of men and women. There was also another branch of the Brotherhood (chiefly lay and educational) with its headquarters at Deventer. Both branches suffered greatly in the troublous times of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and at the close of the eighteenth century only one House of each branch was in existence. Both were suppressed by a decree of the Emperor Napoleon I, dated 14 November, 1811. The last surviving brother died at Zevenaar in 1854.

home with an honourable and devout lady, who was most good and kind to me and to many other students. Being thus brought into touch with this holy man [Florentius] and his brethren, I marked well, and rejoiced in, their devout life and conversation. . . . Never before do I remember to have seen men so devout, and so full of love towards God and their fellow-men. Living in the world, they were altogether unworldly."[1] "They were of one heart and one mind in God: what each possessed was held in common: and being content with plain food and clothing, they took no thought for the morrow."[2] "Master John Boëme, Rector of the school, was also choir-master; and by his orders I used to sing in the choir along with my schoolfellows. Whenever I saw my patron Florentius standing in the choir, his mere presence, even though he did not look about, filled me with such awe that I did not dare to chatter."[3] "It happened once, as I was near him in the choir, that he turned to the book, and joined us in singing. Being close behind me, he put his hands on my shoulders; and I stood like a statue, scarcely daring to move, so overcome was I by the great honour he had done me."[4]

Later—it must have been in the year 1398—Florentius Radewyn took Thomas back into his

[1] "Lives of the Disciples of Florentius," chap. i, § 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, § 3.
[3] "Life of Florentius," chap. xi, § 2. [4] *Ibid.*, § 3.

own house; and our author tells the story of that part of his life thus:

"In this house some twenty priests lived together in community. . . . There were also three lay-brothers, of whom one was the procurator and did the marketing, one was in charge of the kitchen, and the third mended the clothes."[1] "Here I learnt to write neatly, and studied Holy Scripture, moral philosophy, and the practice of devout meditation. . . . What I earned as a copyist I made over to the common purse, and all that I needed was provided for me by my beloved Master Florentius, who was like a father to me in all things."[2]

In the year 1399, moved thereto by a dream and by the advice of the saintly Florentius, he sought admission to the newly established monastery of Agnetenberg,[3] of which his brother was then

[1] "Life of Arnold Schoenhoven," § 2.

[2] *Ibid.*, § 3.

[3] Agnetenberg is a small wooded eminence some two miles to the north-east of Zwolle. The monastery was founded in A.D. 1398. In A.D. 1559 its revenues were appropriated to the endowment of the newly established bishopric of Deventer. In A.D. 1573 the few monks who had remained there were driven out, and the monastery was demolished by the Dutch soldiers then fighting the Spaniards. In A.D. 1581 its ruins and what was left of its belongings were granted by the States-General to the province of Overyssel. No trace of the monastery remains: what is supposed to have been its site is now a

Prior.[1] Seven years later he was professed, and in 1413—being then thirty-three years old—he was ordained priest.

At Agnetenberg he spent practically the rest of his life;[2] and died there in the year 1471. In 1425 he was made Sub-Prior of the monastery, and he acted (probably in 1432) for a short time as its Procurator; but the office was not one to which he was suited, and he was soon relieved of it, and re-elected Sub-Prior. This post he seems to have resigned somewhere about the year 1456, and to have afterwards held no particular office in the monastery. From the time of his admission to the monastery till within a few months of his death he kept the monastery Chronicle;

cemetery, and close to it is a small inn which is a favourite summer afternoon resort of people from Zwolle.

[1] John à Kempis left Agnetenberg in 1408. He served as superior of five other houses, and died in 1432 at one of them, the convent of Bethania near Arnheim.

[2] He does not seem to have left the monastery after his Profession except upon one occasion, that, namely, of an interdict laid upon the diocese of Utrecht in 1429. This interdict was resisted by many of the laity, and the monks of Agnetenberg had to choose between obedience to the interdict and quitting their monastery. They chose the latter alternative, and took refuge at Lunenkerk in Friesland. There Thomas remained with them till 1431, when he was sent to Bethania, to attend his brother who was then in failing health. In 1432 the interdict was taken off, and the monks returned to Agnetenberg, where Thomas (after his brother's death) rejoined them.

and his death is thus recorded in it by its continuator:

"In the same year (1471), on the feast of St. James the Less, after Compline, died our dearly loved Brother Thomas Haemerken,[1] born at Kempen, a town in the diocese of Cologne. He was in the ninety-second year of his age, the sixty-third [it was really the sixty-fifth] of his religious clothing, and the fifty-eighth of his priesthood. In his youth he was a disciple, at Deventer, of Master Florentius, who sent him to his [Thomas's] brother, who was then Prior of Agnetenberg. He was then twenty years of age; he received the habit from his brother after six years' probation, and throughout his monastic life he underwent great poverty, temptations, and labours. He copied our Bible and many other books, some for the use of the convent, and others for sale. Further, for the edification of the young he composed divers small

[1] In everyday life he was probably known as Thomas Kempis. In the monastery Chronicle he four times refers to himself by name; once (in the record of his Profession) as "Thomas Hemerken de Kempis," on the other three occasions as "Thomas Kempis." He signs his autograph copy of the "Imitation" as "Thomas Kempis," and four out of the five volumes of his copy of the Bible (cf. note 2, page xxi) are also thus signed: the fifth volume (the New Testament, and the earliest in date) is signed "Thomas de Kempis." In the British Museum Library the works of Thomas à Kempis and the literature connected therewith are catalogued under the name "Haemmerlein."

treatises in a plain and simple style, but full of wisdom and practical utility. He had a special devotion to the Passion of our Lord, and excelled as a comforter of the tempted and distressed. At length, in his old age, after suffering from dropsy of the legs, he fell asleep in the Lord. He was buried in the East Cloister, by the side of Brother Peter Herbort."[1]

Thomas à Kempis is described by his contemporaries as a man of somewhat less than average height, with a brownish, high-coloured face, lit up by bright piercing eyes, the sight of which was so good that even in extreme old age he did not need spectacles.

During his sub-priorate he acted as novice-master, and throughout his monastic life he was a laborious and beautiful copyist.[2] He was no scholar in the then (Renaissance) sense of the term, nor was he a great orator; but he is said

[1] "Chronicle of Agnetenberg," page 137.

[2] His most important work of this nature was a copy of the Vulgate, which it took him fifteen years to write. It is in five stately volumes, which were bound in 1576, and is preserved in the Grand-Ducal Library at Darmstadt. The medallions upon the covers of this book have been copied from those on its binding. What the handwriting of Thomas was like may be seen from specimens given of it in Dr. Kettlewell's "Authorship of the de Imitatione Christi" (Rivingtons, 1877), and from an exquisite facsimile of his autograph copy of the "Imitatio" published by Messrs. Elliot Stock and Co. in 1879.

to have been always ready to preach—and preach well—after making a brief meditation, or, if tired, taking a short nap. He was ever the first to come to choir and the last to leave it. During the chanting of the Psalms he stood upright, never leaning or supporting himself in any way; and he was often noticed to be standing on tiptoe, with his eyes raised heavenwards. To one who twitted him with being fonder of Psalms than of salmon (apparently a not uncommon monkish pleasantry) he is said to have answered: "Yes, but I hate to see men not attending to them." He was happier in his cell than out of it, and took little or no interest in the affairs of the outside world. His favourite motto (see Frontispiece) is said to have been, "I sought for rest, but found it not save in a little corner with a little book." Of a true Religious, he tells us, "silence should be the friend, work the companion, and prayer the helper."[1] He scourged himself in his cell at least once a week, singing the while a hymn, the first words of which were "*Stetit Jesus.*"[2]

Such, briefly, were the chief characteristics of the author of this book; and we may now pass on to consider the previous English "translations" of it.

[1] "Spiritual Exercises," ii, 15, § 1.

[2] The words of this hymn are not known. It was probably of Thomas à Kempis' own composition; but it is not among the twenty hymns printed by Sommalius in his collection of our author's works.

The first is that of Father Miles Pinkney,[1] who wrote under the name of "Thomas Carre." It was published in Paris in 1664, and is now very rare. Carre's translation—though every now and then a difficult phrase is shirked in it—is complete and faithful. Its fault is that it is so faithful in the way of simply turning the Latin words into Latin-English, that were it reproduced few people would care to use it.

The next in order is a Protestant translation by Henry Lee, LL.B., the first edition of which was published in 1760, and the second (identical with the first) in 1762. Its title-page runs thus: "Meditations and Prayers on the Life and Loving-kindnesses of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in four Parts, etc. Written originally in Latin by Thomas à Kempis, and now translated into English for the Benefit of devout Christians by Henry Lee, LL.B., etc."

But in his preface the "translator" writes thus: "It will be proper to observe that as Castalio and Dean Stanhope have taken liberties, and great ones too, in many places, in their versions of the 'Imitation of Christ,' so the like and perhaps greater liberties have been taken in the translation of this work. . . . One chapter in the Second Book is

[1] An interesting biography of Father Miles Pinkney will be found at p. 313 of vol. v of Gillow's "Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics" (London, Burns and Oates).

wholly left out. I must remark, too, that as I have often abridged some of his sentiments, where he seems to have grown languid; so I have altered and enlarged upon others, where it was needful either to rectify some error, or to set some circumstance as far as I was able in a clearer light. . . . I have inserted some particulars which he had omitted, and which were I thought necessary to be added, as well as have endeavoured for a further manifestation of the wisdom of God in the mystery of the Gospel to point out what is little attended to, the end of their being recorded; occasionally shewing also the accomplishment of the prophecies in God our Saviour, and particularly of the Psalms. Lastly, to several or most of the Prayers are added some few expressions in order to adapt them the more to the occasion, and to make them the more evident petitions for a conformity to the Son of God. 'All which' (to use Dr. Stanhope's words in his preface to the 'Christian Pattern') 'the reader hath this warning of, to prevent any objections, which might otherwise be raised against the faithfulness of the undertaking.' For I was not so desirous of servilely following the letter, in order to gain any reputation of being the faithful translator, as of preserving the spirit and following the plan, and enforcing the purpose of the author, though it could not well be done otherwise than by impartially omitting what seemed foreign to it, or by adding what I was persuaded would contribute to it."

The outcome of Mr. Lee's system of "translation" is that only about three-tenths of his book come from Thomas à Kempis, the rest being Mr. Lee's; and that its title-page is therefore misleading.

We now come to another Protestant "translation" by the Rev. Dr. S. Kettlewell, two editions of which were published in 1892, and a third (after his death) in 1894.[1]

Dr. Kettlewell writes thus (page xlvii of the Preface, ed. 1894):

"It is necessary to notice that a translation of the 'De Vitâ' was made into English by Henry Lee, LL.B., in 1760. But in this case, so much of the translator's reflections and other references to Scripture are added, that it is difficult to tell what is really Lee's and what belongs to Thomas à Kempis, to whom the whole volume is inscribed [*sic*]. It is most desirable, therefore, that a new translation be made of the 'De Vitâ,' in which rarely is there a word given but what has been written by the devout author himself. This is as necessary as the re-authentication of its real author; that the public may have some confidence that they are using a most precious and veritable

[1] The reason why two editions of this book were published in 1892 was that shortly after its publication Dr. Kettlewell saw fit to cancel some ten pages of his Preface. The edition of 1894 is identical with the former edition of 1892—the cancelled pages of the Preface being replaced, and only one verbal correction made (at p. 339).

treatise of the author of the 'Imitation'—Thomas à Kempis."

And further on in his Preface (para. 13, page li), Dr. Kettlewell writes:

"A few observations must be made about this undertaking before concluding. As in some of the former editions of the 'Imitation' it was found desirable to omit certain passages, so also has it been felt advisable to do so, even to a greater extent, in the 'De Vitâ.' Any words sanctioning Mariolatry, and the Invocation of Saints and Angels, or any occasional allusion to some corruption or error prevalent in the Pre-Reformation Church, are carefully excluded. Indeed three entire chapters are left out: two in the second Part, which to a certain extent repeat what had gone before; the other chapter is in the third Part, founded on Christ's appearance after His Resurrection to the Virgin Mary."

The three omitted chapters are XXVI and XXXIV of Treatise I, Part II, and Chapter VI of Treatise II, Part I.

But besides these entire chapters I have counted fifty-six (evidently intentional) omissions of words, sentences, and paragraphs, running sometimes to a whole page or more; and the statement that "rarely is there a word given but what has been written by the devout author" seems to me inadequate. I have noted forty-five passages (not infrequently running to a whole sentence at a time) in which, apart from omissions, the sense

of the original has (clearly of set purpose) been altered; and some of these changes are grotesque, to use no stronger term.

As instances of what is meant, I may cite the following:

(1) At page 216, in order to avoid a reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the author's words: "*Conforta me, Deus meus, in omni pressura cordis mei propter meritum sacratissimae passionis tuae et vehementes dolores et uberrimas lacrimas beatissimae matris tuae Mariae, quas ex compassione et aspectu vulnerum tuorum juxta crucem stando et amarissime flendo effudit*"; are translated thus: "Comfort me, my God, in every trouble of my heart, by the merits of Thy most sacred Passion; and by the vehement grief and the plenteous tears, which Thou, out of compassion for me, didst pour forth on the Cross."[1]

(2) At page 339 (in order to get rid of a reference to the sign of the Cross), Thomas à Kempis is made to say—in a prayer addressed to God the Holy Ghost—"Against all terrors of the night, and temptations of the devil, grant me the gift of faith in Thy Cross and Passion"![2]

Five-sixths of Chapter X,[3] Treatise II, Part I,

[1] For a translation of the Latin words see p. 207, lines 28 to 33.

[2] A translation of the passage will be found at page 323, lines 3 to 6.

[3] In Dr. Kettlewell's book, by the omission of Chapter VI, Chapter X has become Chapter IX.

are so trimmed and edited that the text is scarcely recognizable in the "translation."

From all this it seems plain that those who use either Mr. Lee's or Dr. Kettlewell's "translation," hoping to find in it a veritable treatise of Thomas à Kempis, will be disappointed, and that Father "Carre's" is the only English translation (in any true sense of the word) of the "De Vitâ" which has yet appeared.

That work cannot, unfortunately, be republished; for to revise it, without re-writing it, would be practically impossible, and to reprint it as it stands would be to print something which scarcely any one would read. This fact, the appearance last year of Dr. Pohl's text, and the kind suggestion of a friend, have led to the present attempt. It has been a labour of love; and that it may be useful to those into whose hands it may come is the earnest hope of

THE TRANSLATOR.

October, 1903.

The Translator's notes are marked thus [——].

TREATISE I

PART I

DEVOUT MEDITATIONS ON THE LIFE OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, AND UPON THE BENEFITS WROUGHT BY HIM FOR US, WITH THANKSGIVING THEREFOR

PART I

PREFACE

WOULDST thou be perfectly cleansed from thy faults;

Wouldst thou be richly endowed with virtues;

Wouldst thou have deep insight into Holy Writ;

Wouldst thou triumph gloriously over thy enemies;

Wouldst thou have abundant consolation when things go wrong with thee;

Wouldst thou upon earth walk humbly with thy God;

Wouldst thou sorrow often upon thy bed;

Wouldst thou shed sweet tears in prayer;

Wouldst thou be on fire in thy meditations;

Wouldst thou persevere in good works;

Wouldst thou be filled with spiritual joy;

Wouldst thou be rapt in ecstasy;

Wouldst thou enter into the deep things of God;

Wouldst thou die happily at the last;

Wouldst thou reign for ever in Heaven—
exercise thyself in the Life and in the Passion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Whom the Father

sent into the world, that He might give to all men the example of a perfect life, and might bring to an everlasting Kingdom those who follow Him.

Love Christ therefore: follow Jesus: hold fast to the Crucified.

CHAPTER I

Devout thanksgivings for the whole Life of Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man: and firstly a prayer arousing the soul to the praise of God

O LORD my God, I wish to praise Thee; for I know that to praise Thee was the end for which I was created.

Open Thou my lips to praise Thee, that I may worthily magnify Thy name.

Lift up my heart to Thee; keep me from being weary; shed forth upon me Thy grace; kindle in my heart the fire of Thy love; that so I may be able to render to Thee the thanks that are Thy due.

Take Thou away the iniquity of Thy servant; wash me from all uncleanness, whether of the flesh or of the spirit; that so I may be made worthy to open my lips to glorify Thy Name.

But who can worthily extol the depth of Thy infinite Majesty? All the powers of Heaven, all the Angelic hosts, can never praise Thee worthily: how then can frail man attain thereto, who is a thing of corruption, and a worm?

No creature, no thought, no tongue, no lan-

guage, can ever duly praise Thee.—What then? Shall I cease from praising Thee, because I cannot praise Thee worthily? Shall I be silent, and close my lips, because I know them to be unclean, and myself to be a thing of nought?

Far from me be such ingratitude, as that I should cease to praise Thee, Whom every creature is bound to praise: and above them all man, whom Thou hast endowed with reason; on whom, beyond all others, Thou hast bestowed so many gifts.

O Father of mercies, and God of infinite goodness, I know in truth, I confess from the bottom of my heart, that in Thy sight I am a sinner of utter vileness, one who with downcast eyes, with groans and tears, should rather plead for mercy, than think of taking upon his polluted lips Thy most sweet name, and dare to praise it.

And yet, trusting in Thy lovingkindness and in Thy unfathomable goodness, I long to praise Thee, beseeching from the depth of my heart the bowels of Thy mercies, that Thou wouldst not despise me, nor hold me back from praising Thy glorious name, impure worm and foul carcase though I be: but wouldst kindle and inflame my inmost soul to praise Thee with devout and joyful lips.

Thine own praise, O my God, Thou Thyself art; nor canst Thou be worthily praised by any other than Thyself; for of all things Thou art the Maker and the Ruler; and from Thee do all things come, whose excellence and whose work declare the Glory of Thy name.

Ever therefore shouldst Thou be praised, shouldst Thou be blessed, by every creature. But when the mind contemplates Thy majesty, and longs to join Thee in praising Thee in Thyself for Thy supreme goodness, words come not.

May then, O my God, Thy own incomprehensible Essence, Thy own unspeakable Almightiness, Thy own unsearchable Wisdom, Thy own unutterable Sweetness, Thy own boundless Tenderness, praise Thee!

Praise Thee Thy supreme Goodness; Thy surpassing Mercy; Thy eternal Power also, and Thy transcendent Majesty!

Praise Thee Thy infallible Truth, Thy unchangeable Equity, Thy inextinguishable Light, Thy Knowledge from which no secrets are hid, Thy Own unapproachable Substance!

Praise Thee Thy unerring Justice, Thy all-wise Providence, Thy most calm Governance, and Thy unconquerable Power!

Praise Thee Thy infinite Dignity, Thy supreme Lovingkindness, Thy all-surpassing Sweetness, Thy peerless Beauty, and Thy all-excelling Charity!

May every name that can be used of Thee, and every word that can be spoken of Thee, praise Thee and magnify Thee for ever!

May the most noble Queen of Heaven, the glorious Virgin Mary, praise Thee; and may she, and the whole Court of Heaven, magnify for ever Thy infinite Majesty!

May the thousand thousands of Thy ministering Angels extol Thee with the worship which is Thy due, and sing praises of endless gratitude to the honour of Thy Name!

May the ten thousand times ten thousand citizens of Heaven, who ever stand before Thee, praise Thee with boundless rejoicing, and adore Thee with the deepest reverence!

May all this most joyous Company of the household of Heaven pay to Thee, on my behalf,

devout and acceptable homage; may they praise Thee and magnify Thee for ever!

May all the fervent desires of the Saints, all the sweet utterances of the Doctors of the Church, all the several virtues put forth, and all the most perfect actions wrought, in honour of Thy name, join the universal melody of all created things, in praising and in magnifying Thee to the utmost of their power, blessing the most Holy Name of the Lord their God for ever and ever!

And may all Thy Saints, and all Thy Elect, whose names are written in the Book of Life, laud and magnify Thee with never-ending praise; and may their prayers obtain for me the full remission of my sins, a good death, a happy end, deliverance from the pains of Hell, and an entry into Heavenly glory, there to have the bliss of dwelling with Thee for ever!

CHAPTER II

A Prayer concerning the creation of the first man, and his unhappy fall

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Holy Trinity, and undivided Unity—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—one true and Almighty God, Who, that Thou mightest proclaim the unspeakable abundance of Thy Goodness, didst in the beginning create the heaven and the earth, and the sea and all the things that are therein; and didst exalt man above Thy other creatures, to Thine own image and likeness, by making him powerful in dominion, wise in understanding, and innocent in life.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy surpassing

munificence in endowing man in paradise with delights of every kind, giving him the things above him to enjoy, and the things beneath him to rule —all to be held upon condition of ever praising Thee.

I praise and magnify Thee, most gracious God, for Thy infinite compassion, and Thy unspeakable mercy, in sparing man, who had gone astray, and been ungrateful for all Thy benefits, from a fall beyond recovery, when depriving him for his sins of the joys of paradise, that so he might be brought to repent of them. He had indeed, by his transgression, deserved to be condemned for ever, without hope of pardon; but Thou, by allowing Thy unspeakable mercy to take the place of the severity of Thy Justice, didst lay upon him the burden of a fitting penance, the smart of which was to be healed after many days by the balm of a long-wished-for pardon. And this was done that the creature, whom Thou hadst endowed with reason, and who had fallen into sin by his own fault, might be saved by Thy grace.

Every faithful soul therefore is bound to render thanks to Thee, and never to trust in its own strength, or boast of its own merits or righteousness. Thy creatures, O my God, are we all: by Thy Goodness we exist: of Thy Bounty have we received all that we have: of our own perversity it is that we fall, and are found wanting in Thy sight; and were it not that by Thy merciful aid we are again raised up and strengthened, we should sink lower and lower, and end by being consumed in our iniquities.

Thy compassion, then, most gracious God, we entreat; the abundance of Thy tender lovingkindness we remember, we joyfully extol, we proclaim

as best we may; and for the multitude of Thy compassions, poured forth without stint upon us, Thy polluted children, sold under sin, we offer to Thee, with thanksgiving, our Sacrifice of love and praise.

CHAPTER III

Of the reinstatement of man, and the promise of Christ's coming

O ALMIGHTY and most gracious God, Whose nature is goodness, Whose Will is power, Whose property it is to have mercy, I bless Thee, and render thanks to Thee for Thy infinite love, and for Thy free and undeserved goodness, in that Thou didst lose no time in calling back man, who had been taken captive in the snare of the devil, and brought low by the poison of a mortal disease, from his manifold wanderings from the right way, and from the defilement of his sins, into the way of repentance, and a state of righteousness; by giving to him, through the saving promise of Thy coming, the hope of pardon, and the prospect of a remedy to be brought within his reach.

And lest man should at any time seek to plead ignorance as an excuse for the malice of his sin, Thou didst give him frequent warning of the error of his ways, by revealing to him Thy law, by smiting him with Thy heavy hand, by exercising open judgements upon sinners, by working frequent miracles, and by promising good things to come; that so they might be without excuse who should not turn to Thee as their God, and to a knowledge of the truth.

For all through the five ages of the world,[1] by means of Patriarchs, of Judges, of Priests, of Kings, and of Prophets, from righteous Abel even unto John the Baptist, Thy forerunner, Thou didst never cease, by wonderful miracles and manifold prophecies, to foretell, to promise, and to prefigure Thy coming, without which we are undone: that so, by means of so many witnesses going before Thee, and proclaiming Thy mysteries, Thou mightest implant in our minds the grace of faith, and by the lively examples of so many ancient Fathers, mightest kindle in our dull cold hearts the fire of Thy love.

CHAPTER IV

Of the redemption of the human race by the mystery of the Incarnate Word

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, my Lord and my God, Creator and Redeemer of the human race, for Thy exceeding great love in willing that man, whom Thou hadst wonderfully created, should be still more wonderfully redeemed. For it was when we were yet thine enemies, and death had long tyrannized over all the human race, that Thou didst call to mind Thy rich mercies, and from the place of Thy habitation in glory, didst look down upon this vale of tears and wretchedness.

[1] [Probably an allusion to a sermon of St. Gregory the Great (on the gospel for Septuagesima Sunday) in which the five hours of the day, during which the labourers were hired to work in the vineyard, are explained as representing five ages of the world.]

It was when Thou hadst seen that the affliction of Thy people was great upon the earth, and that the burden of the sons of Adam was grievous to be borne, that, inwardly moved by the tenderness of Thy charity, Thou didst set Thyself to think in our behalf thoughts of Redemption and of peace.

For, when the fullness of time was come, Thou Thyself, the Dayspring from on high, didst come to visit us, and didst fulfil the desires of the prophets by taking upon Thyself our Flesh, and appearing among men true God and true man.

I bless and praise Thee, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, for Thy exceeding great humility in deigning to choose for Thy Mother a poor young maiden, and for causing her to be espoused to the poor carpenter Joseph, a just and holy man.

I bless Thee for making known Thy most illustrious Incarnation, and for the reverent angelic greeting, with which the Angel Gabriel most devoutly saluted the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, making known to her the Divine Mystery that she should be the Mother of the Son of God.

I praise and magnify Thee for the grandeur of the faith of Mary the Virgin, for the courage of her assent, for the lowliness of her reply, and for all the other virtues which she so conspicuously displayed, when she made her obedient answer to the angel's message in the words: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.*"

I praise and glorify Thee, O Eternal Wisdom of the Father, for the marvellous condescension of Thy unapproachable Majesty in entering the vile prison of our mortal frame, and for Thy most pure Conception, by the operation of the Holy Ghost upon Mary; in whose virgin womb the

Power of the most Highest, overshadowing her, formed Thy most sacred Body from the undefiled flesh of a pure virgin. For Thou, being at the same time true God, consubstantial with the Eternal Father, wast made one flesh with us, without spot of sin, to make us one spirit with Thee, through the adoption of the sons of God.

I praise and magnify Thee for voluntarily emptying Thyself of Thy fullness, and for graciously taking upon Thyself our weak and degraded nature, capable of suffering and of death; that so Thou mightest fill us by emptying Thyself, mightest save us by Thy sufferings, mightest raise us by Thy lowliness, mightest strengthen us by Thy weakness, and by Thy death mightest bring us to a glorious immortality.

I praise and magnify Thee, for that Thou, Whose Divine nature knows neither times nor seasons, but Who hast ordered all things here below in their season and time, didst vouchsafe to dwell for nine long months within the narrow limits of a virgin's womb, and to lie hid there as a babe waiting for the due time of his birth.

O the gracious and most wondrous condescension of Him, Who, though God of boundless glory, did not think scorn of becoming a contemptible worm; and Who, though He had created all things by His own mere Will, yet, to free us from them, was ready to take upon Himself our sorrows!

O most sweet Jesus, Thou Brightness of the Eternal Glory, the lower Thou hast made Thyself, by taking upon Thee our nature, the more exalted dost Thou appear to me in Thy Goodness; the viler Thou hast made Thyself for me, the dearer hast Thou become to me.

CHAPTER V

Of the birth and poverty of the Lord Jesus

I BLESS, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten of the Father, born before all worlds, Who, of Thy unspeakable condescension, didst vouchsafe to be born in a filthy stable, and for love of holy poverty, to be laid in a narrow manger.

I praise Thee, most loving Jesus, for Thy illustrious origin; for Thy glorious birth of the pure Virgin Mary; for Thy poverty; and for Thy humility in lying in so poor and mean a crib. Who can meditate as he should on the thought of the most High God, so demeaning Himself for our sake? O what thanks does not the human race owe to Thee, Who, for its redemption, didst choose to lie in a narrow manger!

O boundless tenderness, O wondrous sweetness, O sweetest love—God born a helpless babe, wrapped in mean swaddling clothes, laid in a narrow manger, with brute beasts surrounding Him!

O humility passing human thought, that the Lord of all lords should deign to become the fellow-servant of His own servants! But, O my Lord, and my God, it seemed to Thee too small a thing, that Thou Who art my Creator shouldst also be my Father; Thou didst even stoop to become my Brother, and to be made flesh of my flesh, taking in very truth my nature upon Thee, sin only excepted.

O Birth, outside the course of nature, triumph-

ing over the natural order of our births, and assuaging by Divine power the tears which we shed at them, in order that, by It, our nature might be restored!

O how blessed and how lovely was Thy Nativity, O sweetest Jesus, Child of the illustrious Virgin, Who, by Thy birth from the womb of Thy highly exalted Mother Mary, dost make good the faults of our birth, renew our condition, cancel our condemnation, blot out the handwriting of the decree which was against us; that so, if a man is tempted to repine at being born of Adam's stock, he may rejoice in Thy undefiled Nativity, and in the most blessed trust that by Thy grace he has been born again.

I thank Thee, for Thy self-chosen and glorious Nativity, O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, by Whom we have access to that Grace in which we stand, and trust in the hope restored to us from above of the glory of the sons of God. Thou art the pledge of our redemption: Thou art the everlasting hope of all men; to Thee do we sinners humbly fly for refuge—to Thee, Who didst come to seek us, when as yet we knew Thee not.

O sweet and holy Infancy, from which alone true innocency comes to human hearts; by which, however old a man may be, he may go back to blessed infancy, and may be made like to Thee, not by the shrinking of his limbs, but by the lowliness of his mind, and the holiness of his life!

O most gentle Jesus, Who, that Thou mightest give to all men an example of a holy life, and the means of everlasting salvation, didst will to be born of Mary the Virgin, at the hour of midnight, grant that I may tread in the sacred footsteps of

Thy humility and poverty! Grant that I may join, in giving praise and thanks to Thee, the Angels and the whole company of the heavenly host, whom Thou didst cause to be the joyful heralds of Thy Nativity!

CHAPTER VI

Of the hardships and want of Jesus in His low estate

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for that, as soon as Thou hadst taken upon Thee our flesh, Thou didst, for love of us, endure many hardships, and didst make trial, in all its bitterness, of the stress of utter poverty. For when Thou, very God, wast born into the world, Thou didst choose for the hour of Thy birth the secrecy of the night, and for its ease and comfort the winter cold: Thou didst not seek, as a home for Thy sovereign Majesty, the grandeur of a stately palace, but didst find instead, in a little crib, a shelter for Thy infant helplessness.

O poverty beyond compare, that Thou couldst scarce find swaddling clothes wherein to wrap Thee—Thou Who holdest the world in the hollow of Thy hand, Who unto Adam and to his wife didst make coats of skins, Who in wondrous variety dost adorn the sky with stars, the earth with flowers, and beasts with their coats of hair.

O holy poverty of the Son of God, more precious than all earthly wealth, poverty in which scarce one of us can follow Thee! For which of us has come into the world in straits such as Thine? In

what language, in what story, shall we find examples of any of Thy Saints born under conditions so mean and so poor?

To Thee, then, O my Jesus, mighty King, Infant worthy of all love; to Thee do I offer from the bottom of my heart the tribute of all the gratitude of which my heart is capable, beseeching Thee that, of Thy love, Thou wouldest grant me lovingly to cherish the joys of holy poverty, and by the help of Thy grace to bear its hardships patiently. Thou didst leave Thy Throne on high that Thou mightest commend the state of poverty to our love: to Thy riches, as God, no limits can be set; but as man, for our sakes, Thou madest Thyself poor.

I praise and magnify Thee, for taking upon Thyself our poverty and weakness; and for holding us so dear, that laying aside Thy royal diadem, Thou didst vouchsafe to be numbered among the sons of men, and as if Thou hadst been one of them, to share the frailty of our nature, yet without any spot of sin.

CHAPTER VII

Of the crying of the Infant Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Joy of Angels, Comforter of the sad at heart, for Thy infant crying and tears, wherewith Thou didst sorrowfully mourn over the sins of the sons of Adam.

O thing of wonder, O surpassing condescension, that He Who is very God should cry in a cradle as a helpless babe; that He, to Whom in Heaven

Angels sing praise, should, as one subject to death, hang upon a Mother's breasts; that He Who sustains and gives food to all flesh, Who makes the clouds to thunder, and the rain to water the earth, should be held by the hand, and be carried about as a helpless child!

How is that which is highest joined with that which is lowest, that which is of man with that which is of God!

It was to wash me from my iniquity that, as an Infant, Thou didst weep; it was over my sins that Thy tears were shed. Therefore, O my Lord and my God, I owe Thee more for the sorrows, by which Thou didst redeem me, than for that mighty working by which Thou didst create me. How ought I not to bewail my sins, since Thou, O Lord, didst weep so constantly over them! How grievous must have been the wounds of my soul, when the tears which Thou didst shed over them were so many!

And yet there is nothing strange or wondrous in the thought that Thou, Who camest down from heaven to shed Thy precious Blood to wash us from our sins, shouldst shed tears of pity for them.

I praise Thee, therefore, my beloved Jesus, and I will never cease to praise Thee, for the love and for the pity Thou hast shown to me, a miserable sinner.

CHAPTER VIII

Of the suckling of the hungry Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, never-failing Fountain of life, for being suckled at the breasts of Mary the Virgin, by whose sacred milk Thou wast fed—Thou Who givest food to all, Thou Who art the Food and Bread of Angels.

O the unspeakable sweetness of the condescension of God to man! Who can rightly think of the excellence of the mystery and the bounty of the undeserved mercy, that God should be suckled at a Mother's breasts, and be nourished by a Virgin's milk? O my Lord and my God, with what tenderness of love hast Thou made Thyself one with me, by thus subjecting Thyself to the needs of our human weakness! O great and tremendous mystery that Thou, one and the same Person, art thus made known to us as God of the substance of God the Father, and very man of the substance of Thy virgin Mother: that we thus confess Thee to be, at one and the same time, the son of a woman, and the Only-Begotten of the Father's Glory: that Thou art made a partaker of our human nature, and yet, being one and the same person, art worshipped as the Lord of Angels.

I praise Thee, therefore, and bless Thy infinitely tender love, for that Thou didst think no scorn of being nourished at Thy Mother's breasts, if so Thou mightest make it plain that Thou hadst indeed taken upon Thee our flesh, of the substance of Thy Virgin Mother.

O Thou Who givest food to all, and wast Thyself content with so little, feed my soul, I beseech Thee, with the rich banquet of Thy Holy Word, and give me grace to serve Thee, and to give thanks to Thee, so long as I shall dwell in this frail tenement of clay.

CHAPTER IX

Of the painful Circumcision of the Lord Jesus

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Saviour of the world, Fountain of purity, Pattern of spotless innocence, I bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee for the painful circumcision of Thy most tender Flesh, according to the law of Moses; to which, in order that in all things Thou mightest conform to it, Thou didst submit Thyself, albeit Thou wast Thyself without any spot of sin.

I praise Thee for the first spilling of Thy innocent Blood, which on this day Thou didst shed for us. O most meek Lamb of God, how brightly were the excellence of Thy love and the depth of Thy patience shown forth, when, at so tender an age, Thou didst submit Thy holy and innocent Flesh to the pain of circumcision, a pain which It had not deserved.

It is I who have sinned; it is Thou Who payest the penalty of my sin. I indeed was conceived and born in sin: Thou wast conceived without sin, and yet dost Thou meekly submit to be branded with a sinner's mark. What was there in Thee faulty, or useless, that needed to be cut away? And yet, because I could myself never make to Thee full

satisfaction for my sins, Thou didst come to my help by Thy grace; and didst apply, by the cruel circumcision of Thy Flesh, a cleansing remedy to my soul. But what wonder is it that Thou, Who wast ready to give Thy life, shouldst submit to be circumcised, for us? Having given Thyself wholly for me, Thou art willing to be wholly spent for me.

O most good and gracious Lord Jesus, Thou Who didst meekly undergo the circumcision of Thy innocent Flesh, circumcise, I pray Thee, all my members with the cutting-stone of Thy Grace; order all my actions, and direct all my ways, in conformity with Thy most holy life. All that Thou findest in me unspiritual cut away, I beseech Thee, and destroy: root out all that Thou seest in me to be useless: keep down with all the needful force of Thy discipline whatever in me is false and frivolous; so that, inwardly cleansed from my faults, and adorned with the virtues that I lack, I may have a perpetual love of Thy Holy Name, and be found meet to dwell with Thee in Thy Heavenly Kingdom.

CHAPTER X

Of the bestowal of the Saving Name of Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for the giving to Thee of Thy Saving and Adorable Name, Jesus.

This Name was first made known by the Angel to Blessed Mary the Virgin; later it was revealed to holy Joseph in a dream; but now, on this day, it was given Thee by Thy parents.

O sweetest Name of Jesus, Name blessed above every name, whether in Heaven or on earth! According to Thy Name, O my Jesus, so be Thy praise to the ends of the world. From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, may Thy glorious Name be worthily magnified from this time forth for evermore! From everlasting was this most Holy and Adorable Name made Thine by God the Father; but only when the fullness of time was come, was it made known unto men. For there is no other Name given to men, whereby we must be saved.

Just, therefore, and right is it, that to Thee should bow every knee in Heaven and on earth; and that every tongue should confess that Thou art Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Redeemer. O most sweet Jesus, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth! Great indeed is Thy Name above the name of Solomon, and above those of all the kings which were before or after him. Therefore shall all the kings of the earth fall down and worship Thee; and Thee shall all peoples and languages serve and obey; for Thou art the Lord our God, the King, and the Saviour of all Christians.

O sweet and saving Name of Jesus, which heals all our infirmities, enlightens our minds, sets on fire our hearts, drives away our grief, softens anger, sheds forth peace and concord, fosters charity, and turns our sorrow into joy!

This dearest of all names was brought down to earth by an Angel from Heaven. This name was preached throughout the world by the Apostles. For this name it was that the Martyrs suffered. This name it was that Confessors proclaimed aloud. This name it was that Holy Virgins ardently loved. This name it is which is praised and hymned

by old and young. The most sweet Name of Jesus it is which, rather than deny, thousands upon thousands of the faithful have preferred to suffer death.

This saving Name it is which princes and kings now worship and adore. This name it is which Priests and Doctors publish and proclaim. This name it is which all faithful Christians especially venerate and love; for, renouncing the devil and the world, it is in the name of Jesus that they hope to be saved. For Jesus is the Saviour, and the Protector, of all who are His, and who believe in, and who love, Him to the end.

O most sweet Jesus, my one hope of salvation, write, I beseech Thee, Thy Name upon my heart, not in the letter but in the spirit; and grant that by Thy Grace it may be so strongly there impressed, and may there remain, that neither prosperity nor adversity may ever dim my love for Thee. Be Thou to me a strong tower from the face of the enemy, my comforter in tribulation, my counsellor when I am in doubt, my refuge in distress, my lifter-up when I fall, the model of my life, my restorer when I go astray, and my ever-faithful guide through all the dangers and temptations of this mortal life to my home which is above.

CHAPTER XI

Of the Epiphany of Jesus, and the devout oblation of the Holy Kings

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of the kings of the earth, for Thy glorious Manifestation of Thyself to the three Kings. For after that Thou hadst been born in

Bethlehem of Judaea, Thou wast not slow in revealing Thy Majesty to men who came from afar; and having led them by a heavenly light to Thy humble resting-place, Thou didst manifest to them Thy holy poverty.

O my God, mighty and wonderful, Who alone orderest all things here below, and workest mightily in heaven above, Thou thoughtest it no scorn to be seen in Thy poverty and neglect by so many kings and nobles, if only Thou mightest be to us a pattern of humility. Having for our sakes chosen Thy resting-place, and Thy apparel, Thou didst make no change in them, but didst show Thyself in them, alike to shepherds and to kings.

I praise Thy gracious mercy for these first-fruits of the Gentile world, and for Thy call to these strangers, whom, by a secret inspiration of Thy grace, Thou didst draw from Eastern lands to behold the light of faith. Among the princes of Israel were found none who made ready, with such reverence and trust, to seek the place of Thy Nativity: far more lively was the faith, far more fervent the devotion, of those strangers to the Covenant.

I glorify Thy Holy Name for Thy wondrous enlightenment of Gentiles; for so gloriously didst Thou sent forth Thy light into the hearts of those men of the East, who as yet were sitting in darkness, that without thinking of the length of their journey, they followed with a trust which knew no doubt, the leading of Thy sign from heaven.

I reverently join the Holy Magi in adoring Thee; and following them step by step, I would devoutly offer to Thee their three precious gifts, each containing a deep mystery. For, falling at Thy feet, they offered to Thee gold in token of Thy kingly

dignity, frankincense as doing homage to Thy Divine Majesty, myrrh as confessing Thy submission to the law of death.

Wherefore, O my Lord Jesus Christ, most gracious King of Kings, Ruler of Heaven and of earth, accept, I beseech Thee, at the hand of Thy servant, the mystic offering, which I now humbly present to Thee, through the intercession of the Holy Kings.

I offer to Thee in the first place right faith, firm hope, and pure charity, in which I trust that I may continue to the end. I believe that Thou art the King of Heaven and of Earth: I adore Thee as very God, the Only-Begotten of the Father: I confess that, for my salvation, Thou didst take of the Virgin Mary a mortal Body.

Accept further, I beseech Thee, also these other gifts, each having in itself a sweet-smelling savour. Lo, I give to Thee that which also I received from Thee, namely all my worldly goods, which I renounce for love of Thee. I would not in this life have anything of my own. I wish to be content with common food and simple raiment. This is in a moral sense my oblation of pure gold.

I would add also the gift of frankincense, by which I mean the incense of devout prayer; beseeching Thee, with sighs and tears, for the forgiveness of my sins; praising and thanking Thee for the good gifts Thou hast bestowed upon me; and grieving for all who are in trouble or distress. This, surely, is the burning of fragrant incense, acceptable to Thee.

I offer to Thee also, in figure, myrrh, in memory of Thy most bitter Passion, praying that I too may have grace to run in the way of perfection by the austerity of my self-mortification. For, as often

as, for love of Thee, I call to mind the bitterness of Thy Passion, I offer to Thee, in figure, the choicest myrrh: and whenever I overcome in myself evil desires, and renounce my own will, I bruise, as best I may, in the mortar of my heart, fragrant myrrh, that so from thence may come forth a sacrifice acceptable to Thee. Oh, how happy should I be, if I could offer to my Jesus a bundle of myrrh, by gathering together into one all the labour, all the sorrow, and all the bitterness of Thy Passion! For it is by such a mingling of myrrh and frankincense that the faithful soul is moved to earnest efforts after amendment, to acts of penance, and to the mortification of corrupt desires.

I give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for the high sanctity of this day, which Thou didst adorn with three mighty wonders. For on this day Thou didst lead three kings to the Manger in Bethlehem; on this day Thou wast baptized of John in the river Jordan; on this day Thou didst turn water into wine at the marriage at Cana in Galilee—by all which things Thou didst plainly manifest Thyself to be both God and man.

I pray Thee, therefore, O my meek and gracious Lord, that Thou wouldst never suffer me to be led astray by Herodian wiles, that is to say by worldly honours, and the allurements of the flesh; but that, through the merits of the Holy Kings, and the prayers of Thy most chaste Mother, and under the protection of Thy angelic host, Thou wouldest lead me, together with the Blessed Kings, along the way that leadeth to the Heavenly Country, there to behold Thee in Thy everlasting glory.

CHAPTER XII

Of the Purification of Blessed Mary, and the Presentation of Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Fountain of purity, for Thy lowly Presentation in the Temple of God, where, with victims and with gifts, Thou wast offered by Thy parents as one of the sons of Adam, and wast redeemed with five shekels of silver, as if Thou hadst been some chattel of a slave, sold and bought back again.

I bless Thee, for Thy lowly obedience to the Law of God, O most Holy Redeemer of the world, Who—Thyself free from any debt of sin—didst make Thyself subject to all the ordinances of the Law, that Thou mightest be to us an example of perfect obedience.

I glorify Thee for the exceeding humility of Thy most blessed Mother, and for her obedience, of her own free choice, to the Law of Moses: for, although she was both before and after child-birth, a Virgin undefiled, yet did she not think scorn of submitting to the rite of Purification.

O most pleasing oblation! O most sweet satisfaction! For it was free: it was full: and it was faultless.

But what shall I offer, what shall I render unto Thee, my Lord and my God, for all Thy benefits to me? O how needful for me is purification, for the washing away of my sins; how expedient for me is satisfaction for my acts of transgression—for me who am polluted with the stains of so many sins.

To Thee, therefore, O most gracious Lord Jesus Christ, to Thee do I look up, beseeching Thee, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to make satisfaction for me, and to wash away my sins by Thy most pure oblation of Thyself: that so, cleansed and purified by Thy grace, I may win an entrance into the Temple of Thy heavenly Abode, there to praise Thy Holy Name for ever.

And do Thou also, Holy Mother of God, glorious Virgin Mary, pray for me that my sins may be forgiven: that there may be granted to me time for repentance, and a firm purpose of amendment, by the help of God's grace: and that there may be nothing wanting in me to win back my place in God's favour. Do thou plead for me, O most gracious Mother, by offering thyself, together with thy most dearly beloved Son, before our Father in heaven. May thy virginal purity atone for my impurities, whether of body or of soul; may thy love inflame the coldness of my heart; may thy humility subdue my pride; may thy voluntary obedience break down the hardness of my perverse will.

I place myself in thy hands, and in those of thy dearly-beloved Son: and whatever I can do, that I shall always be ready to do, in His service, and in thine.

I offer a pair of turtle doves, to wit, a twofold compunction of heart, first by way of grieving for my sins and shortcomings, and next by way of sighing for the joys that have no end.

I also present willingly, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord, two young pigeons: earnestly desiring, that is, to keep a twofold simplicity of heart, first by way of rendering to no man evil for evil, and next by way of overcoming evil with good.

For all which do Thou vouchsafe to grant me Thy grace, O kind Jesus, Who wast on this day presented in the Temple by Thy lowly virgin Mother, and wast taken up with joy into the loving arms of the just and devout Simeon.

CHAPTER XIII

Of the persecution of Jesus, and His flight into Egypt

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most mighty King of Kings, for Thy persecution, and for the hardships forced upon Thee, in the days of Thy childhood, when Thou didst flee from the face of the most wicked King Herod, and wast driven forth as a stranger and an outcast from Thine own land, and hadst to enter in secret that land of Egypt, from which, in the days of old, Thou hadst with a mighty hand led forth the children of Israel.

I praise and magnify Thee for the toilsome journey and long exile, which Thou didst undergo, dwelling in a foreign land for the space of seven years, amidst a barbarous people, and men altogether strange to Thee.

How cruel was the wickedness which could seek to slay the Author of life, and could drive out, from the land into which He had been born, the King of heaven! What tears would not one have shed, could one have seen the graceful virgin Mother, with her Child, so fair and so beloved, hurrying away, sheltered by the darkness of the night, to take refuge in a land of which they knew

nothing! Truly this instance of persecution is to us a bright example of patience, and is a lesson to all Christ's people not to wonder at having to suffer many things at the hands of men who know Him not.

I praise and magnify Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for Thy blessed return from Egypt; for journeying back again into Thine own land; for dwelling with Thy parents in the City of Nazareth, as their son; for the innocent life led by Thee in that city among their friends and neighbours; and for submitting to share the poverty of Thy Mother, and of her Spouse, the holy Joseph.

Grant to me now, I beseech Thee, O my beloved Jesus, to tread, at least in my small degree, in Thy steps, in this matter of patience; give me grace not to murmur when I have to suffer wrong; but rather humbly to give way to an angry man, to submit cheerfully to being laughed at, and evil spoken of; and when any one vexes and annoys me, give me grace to curb my anger against him, to pray earnestly for his salvation, and so far as may be, to set down his fault to the account of the old serpent who led him into it.

Give me grace to live peaceably with my brethren, willingly to give way to them, and with them patiently to bear, for Thy honour and glory, the lack of this world's goods, no matter how great it may be.

CHAPTER XIV

Of the Holy Innocents, put to death by Herod for the Name of Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Hope of those who die young, glory of the lowly, and crown of all the saints, for the deaths of so many innocent children put to death on account of Thy Holy Name.

I praise and magnify Thee for these first fruits of the Holy Martyrs, who suffered without having ever sinned, whom Thou didst deliver out of this world pure in body and in soul; thus bestowing the crown of martyrdom upon those who had not yet come to the use of reason.

I adore the equity of Thy judgements, manifested in all Thy works: Thou didst exalt the pure and humble to Thy everlasting glory; but didst cast down into Hell, there to be confounded for ever, Herod and the partners in his guilt.

I earnestly implore Thee, O most pure Jesus, to give me, of Thy mercy, grace to follow, in heart and life, the innocence, and the humility of those little ones; so that, laying aside all rancour and arrogance, I may henceforth show myself among my brethren, more gentle, more pure, more lowly, more patient, and more cheerful. May no weakness of the flesh defile me; but by a thorough mortification of my faults may I be kept pure and without offence.

CHAPTER XV

Of the finding of Jesus in the Temple

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Pattern of humility and mighty Teacher of eternal truth, for the example of Thy stupendous humility, and for the light of Thy hidden wisdom, shown forth to men, at Thy going up to Jerusalem with Thy parents for the Feast; what time Thou didst offer for us to God the Father sacrifices of holy prayer and praise, and didst sit humbly, as a boy of twelve, in the midst of the Doctors, hearing them and discreetly asking them questions, fixing upon Thyself the attention of all who beheld Thee.

I praise Thee, and I magnify with the deepest devotion Thy Holy Name, for the reverent obedience which Thou didst show to Thy parents who long time sought Thee, and at length found Thee; in that Thou, the King of Heaven, renouncing straightway Thine own Will, didst humbly submit Thyself to their authority; and, although they did not understand the saying which Thou spakest unto them, yet didst go down with them from Jerusalem to Nazareth, and didst there show Thyself the most obedient of sons to the best of Mothers.

O most sweet Jesus, most loving of sons, mirror of holiness and of every virtue, teach me, I pray Thee, to subdue the perverseness of my will; cheerfully to bow to the advice of my elders; devoutly to visit the Temple of God; diligently to hear and declare Thy Word; to venerate the Doctors of the Church; to obey my superiors

cheerfully; and to serve Thee joyfully all the days of my life, submitting myself in all things to Thy Holy Will.

CHAPTER XVI

Of the holy and hidden life of the lowly Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for the surpassing holiness of that hidden life, which Thou didst for so long time lead in the house of Thy parents at Nazareth, where Thou didst dwell with them in great poverty, lowliness, and subjection, from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of Thy age.

I most heartily praise and magnify Thee for Thy condescension in veiling Thy Majesty from those among whom Thou didst dwell, in that Thou didst deign to be called, and to be believed to be, the son of a carpenter; and openly didst nothing from which Thy Godhead might be known.

O the humility of Christ! O my God, how dost Thou confound by it my foolish self-conceit; how, by Thy bright example, dost Thou bid me avoid all outward show, turn aside from men of the world, choose to lead a secluded life, seek to be known to God alone, make the salvation of my soul my chief aim, not put myself forward, even for the sake of edification; but rather strive to lay diligently to heart the Word of Life, until such time as the heavenly call shall come to bring forth fruit!

Help me, sweet Jesus, Thou gracious Master, to understand, by diligent meditation upon it, the character of Thy hidden life; to dedicate my own inner self to Thee; ever to love a humble and se-

cluded life, taking no heed of the things of this world; but cherishing rather, as the objects of my love, the things which concern Thee and my home in Heaven; and, in the secret closet of my heart, to treasure up the story of Thy most holy life and conversation.

CHAPTER XVII

Of the Baptism of Jesus, and our sanctification in its waters

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Fountain of goodness, and source of every virtue, for humbly receiving holy Baptism; for fulfilling all righteousness; for voluntarily putting Thyself into the hands of Thy forerunner, by whom Thou didst deign to be baptized in the river Jordan; thus consecrating for us the waters of Baptism, and by Thy example showing to all those who come to that Holy Rite, be they of high or be they of low estate, how needful it is for them humbly to receive the Sacrament of new birth unto Salvation, if they would find a place at last in the mansions of Thy heavenly Kingdom.

In Thy Baptism we too have been washed; that sanctification was for our profit, not for Thine; for Thou wast without any spot of sin.

I praise and magnify Thee, O Divine and Adorable Head, before Which even the angelic spirits veil their faces, for most humbly bowing Thyself, for going down into the Jordan, and for receiving its waters upon Thyself, for the washing away of our sins.

I bless Thee, and glorify Thy Holy Name, for

Thy revelation of heavenly mysteries; for the presence of the most Holy Trinity manifestly shown forth; for the way of entrance into everlasting life opened out to us; for Thy wondrous enlightenment of John the Baptist, Thy blessed Forerunner; for his humble answer to those who questioned him; and for his ready obedience to Thy word.

O my Jesus, most highly exalted King, how greatly didst Thou abase Thyself this day for me, the vilest of sinners; what stores of Divine grace hast Thou opened to me by this Thy condescension! Look Thou upon me, and mercifully forgive all the sins, of which, openly and secretly, I have in so many ways been guilty.

I pray to be baptized by Thee with the Holy Ghost and with fire; for I have in many things offended Thy goodness. Wash me throughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. No one is free from the stain of sin, not even the infant of a day; in all the world no one is pure but Thou alone, the Purifier; Thou alone, the Sanctifier, art Holy, Who, according to the multitude of Thy mercies, hast power to forgive men their sins.

Be gracious unto me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, and let my soul live; nor do Thou remember my former sins, but renew my youth like the eagle's. Forgive what is past; cause me to take heed to my ways in the days that are to come: grant me ever fresh supplies of grace, that so at last I may be found meet to dwell with Thee in the Kingdom of Thy everlasting glory.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the fasting, and the temptations, of the all-unconquered Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for the holy fast, which, in the loneliness of the desert, Thou didst keep for forty days and forty nights, that Thou mightest be to us a model of holy abstinence. There, as a hermit, far from the abodes of men, Thou didst dwell with the wild beasts, and yet hadst Thou Angels for Thy companions; thus setting to all Religious a great example of detachment.

I praise and magnify Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Food of Angels, and Refreshment of men, for the many pangs of hunger, for the wondrous abstinence, for the stern chastisement of Thy most sacred Body, for the many long watchings, for the holy prayers, and for the most pure meditations, which Thou didst accomplish there in the wilderness.

I praise and magnify Thee for ever for Thy mighty conflict with the devil; for the many attacks of that most wicked tempter; for Thy scorning of all his evil suggestions; for the wise answers from Holy Writ, with which Thou didst confound him; and for Thy most glorious victory over the three cardinal sins—all which Thou didst mercifully bring to pass for the perpetual confounding of Satan, and for the strengthening of our weakness.

On meekly bended knees, I join the holy Angels, who, with the reverence which is Thy due, then ministered to Thee, in praising and adoring Thee: and I beseech Thee that, so long as I live in the

wilderness of this present world, Thou wouldest give me daily bread, the help of Thy grace, comfort in tribulation, firmness under temptation, and protection against all the snares of the enemy.

I believe and confess that Thou art Christ, the Son of God, very God, and Lord of Angels, Creator and Redeemer of the human race, in all points proved and tempted in the weakness of our flesh; that so Thou mightest be led to pity us; and having suffered, being tempted like as we are, mightest be able to cure us from the diseases of our sins.

O kind Jesus, Thou most dauntless champion, Who for my sake didst fast so unflinchingly, and didst so bravely fight and conquer, help me, I beseech Thee, to fight manfully against the world, the flesh and the devil, and to repel with steadfast heart every assault of the evil one! For my support and comfort in my exile, send to me, I beseech Thee, Thy holy Angels, ministers of light and peace; may they often visit me, defend me faithfully, succour me powerfully, graciously comfort me, richly bless me; and, when this short life is ended, may they bring me safe and sound, in joy and bliss, to Thee, my only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen.

CHAPTER XIX

Of the holy preaching, and the saving Doctrine of Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou good Shepherd and most faithful Keeper of Thy sheep, for Thy tender care for the salvation of souls, and for Thy ardent longing to

bring to men glad tidings of good things; in that, on leaving the wilderness, Thou wentest forth to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven, and didst sound the trumpet of salvation throughout Judaea, urging all men to repent, to despise the things of this world, and to make haste to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. O most sweet Jesus, with what earnest care didst Thou go about the villages and the streets, the cities and the towns, busy in the conversion of sinners, in healing the contrite of heart, and in forgiving the sins of the truly penitent.

From the bottom of my heart I praise and glorify Thee for Thy most sweet Doctrine; for Thy fervent preaching of the Gospel throughout all Galilee and Judaea; and for Thy fame so gloriously spread abroad among the people which sat in darkness.

Blessed be those sacred lips and that most gracious tongue, with which Thou didst so often proclaim the sweetness of heavenly life, and speak maxims of eternal truth; and with a voice that all might understand, didst declare Thyself to be, that which indeed Thou art, the true and marvellous Light that had come into the world!

O most loving Jesus, of all Masters the best, grant to me, I beseech Thee, that I may with a thirsting heart drink in the streams of Thy saving Doctrine; that I may diligently give my mind to, wisely discern, and lovingly delight in, the words which then fell from Thy sacred lips. Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may fashion all my ways conformably thereto; for no otherwise can I find the way of perfection so brightly and so clearly made plain to me, as in the shining mirror of Thy most holy Gospel set up before me, and before all

men, to be read by us. In Thee, O Lord, Who art the Fountain of eternal wisdom, are to be found in never-ceasing abundance the light of life, and the fullness of joy. Incline, therefore, I beseech Thee, my heart unto Thy testimonies: open Thou mine ear to the words of Thy mouth: turn away mine eyes that they may not behold vanity, and quicken Thou me in Thy way. For although the meaning of the Gospel may appear simple and easy to be understood, yet is it so deep and lofty, and so full of heavenly mysteries, that the whole world would not be large enough to contain them.

CHAPTER XX

Of the glorious miracles, and the kindness and goodness of Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Power of God, and Wisdom of the Father, for the glorious signs and mighty wonders, by which Thou didst shed forth upon the world Thy glorious Light, and didst make known Thy Truth even to those sitting in darkness; openly showing Thyself, by infallible proofs and incontestable miracles, to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who had come into the world to be the Saviour of mankind.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy boundless love, in that Thou didst show Thyself to all men so kind and so good, that not only the poor and the sick, but even the vilest sinners, were not afraid to come to Thee; and were allowed freely to speak to Thee, and to touch Thee.

Blessed be those Eyes, shining more brightly than the sun, Which Thou didst turn, full of pity, upon the crowds who came to Thee, to whom Thou wast so gracious and so compassionate that Thou wouldst in no wise send them away fasting to their homes; but rather didst, not once only but twice, by working a great miracle, more than satisfy many thousands with a few loaves, and some small fishes.

Blessed be those adorable Hands, Which Thou didst freely lay upon so many sick folk; healing at once, by the touch of Thy most sacred Body, all their diseases and infirmities.

Blessed be those all-beautiful Feet, so often wearied, and besmeared with dust, for the Salvation of souls, Which Thou didst use when going to and fro upon the earth, sowing plenteously the Word of Life, proclaiming it to all men, now upon the mountain side, now upon the open plain—working moreover in proof of Thy holy doctrine, frequent miracles, causing men sick of the palsy to go upon their feet, giving sight to the blind, cleansing lepers, casting out devils, and, by the power of God, bringing back the dead to life.

O adorable Jesus, Light of the World, Salvation of Thy people Israel, our Life, our Might, and our Glory, turn Thine Eye of mercy, I beseech Thee, upon my infirmity, and drive out from my heart every evil lust: give sight to the eyes of my soul, that I may see the heavenly light: open the ears of my understanding that I may hear, O my God, what Thou hast to say to me: raise me from my bed of sloth, that I may go on from strength to strength: direct my feet in the path of Thy commandments, and give power to my withered hands for earnest work in Thy service: cleanse me from

the leprosy of the flesh; cure me of the madness of anger; subdue in me the swelling of pride; pluck out from my heart the sting of envy; keep me from excess in eating; drive far from me the plague of covetousness, and crush within me all my impure desires. These most grievous afflictions of an ailing soul, these secret impulses of the devil and his angels, can be healed by Thee alone, O Lord; can be cast out no otherwise than by Thy resistless Word. None can heal these spiritual wounds, none can work wonders of holiness in the inner life, but Thou alone, O Almighty God, Who speakest and it is done, Who commandest and straightway Thy order takes effect. Say therefore, I beseech Thee, to my soul: "*Be thou clean*," and forthwith it shall be cleansed: say to the unclean spirit which so often tempts me: "*Go out of the man, and enter no more into him*": say to my soul, whenever trouble comes upon me, "*Fear not, I am Thy salvation*": speak but one word only, and my soul shall be healed.

CHAPTER XXI

Of the Example, and the Holy Life, of Jesus, and His tribulations in the world

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Pattern of holiness, Model of all perfection, Flower of virtue, Savour of life, Mirror of patience, I bless Thee and give thanks to Thee, for all Thy virtues, for Thy beauteous Life, for Thy surpassing gentleness, and for the faultless example which Thou didst openly set to Thy disciples, and to all the people of Israel; thus

sweetly drawing to the love of Thee the souls of the lowly in heart, moving to repentance, by the gentle tenderness of Thy words, the hard hearts of sinners, and matchlessly instructing the learned, by Thy every act, and by every word of Thy teaching.

I praise and glorify Thee for all the bodily wants and hardships suffered by Thee whilst in the world. Having taken upon Thyself our mortal nature, Thou didst from the hour of Thy Birth to the hour of Thy Death upon the Cross, vouchsafe to undergo for us, worms of earth and appointed to death, hunger often and thirst, cold and heat, toil and weariness, sadness and anxiety; and Thou didst endure all this with perfect mildness and resignation of heart.

I praise and glorify Thee for the malicious snares so often set for Thee; for the many and grievous persecutions and shameful blasphemies so often inflicted upon Thee by the Scribes and Pharisees; and for the monstrous ingratitude, and the odious slanders, with which Thy chosen people repaid Thee for the innumerable benefits and the mighty wonders, which Thou didst so gloriously work among them.

I praise and magnify Thee for the unspeakable travail of Thy Soul for the conversion and salvation of mankind; for the many long watches of the night which Thou didst pass in prayer for us; for the groans and for the tears, which Thou didst pour forth in Thy pity for us; for Thy joy and satisfaction over those who were converted to the Faith; for Thy sublime thanksgivings, and the upliftings of Thy Soul; and for the works—so many and so marvellous—wrought by Thee, to the praise and glory of Thy Heavenly Father.

O most adorable Jesus, brightest Mirror of a holy life, grant, I beseech Thee, to me, Thy unworthy servant, whose life has hitherto been most grievously at variance with Thy Holy Will, so to meditate upon Thy most sweet and perfect example, that I may be led to fashion all my actions and behaviour in accordance with it; that I may learn from it to be meek and lowly in heart; to be moderate in my taking of food; simple in my dress; modest in my bearing; not hurried in my gait; calm in my mind; not an idle talker; prudent in my actions; guarded both as to my outward and my inward life; watchful in prayer; devout in meditation; patient under correction; prompt in obedience; easy to be led in every good way; not slow, not careless, not sullen, not restless, not inconstant, not noisy; but kind, cheerful, affable, and unassuming.

CHAPTER XXII

Of the Feast of Palms, and the lowly entry of Jesus into Jerusalem

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, loving Saviour of the world, and merciful Preserver of mankind, for the splendour of Thy marvellous humility, and for the greatness of that unspeakable love, which Thou didst vouchsafe on this day to show forth, when with bare feet Thou didst ride upon an ass, and amid the Hosannas of a vast multitude of children, didst enter the Holy City of Jerusalem.

I praise and glorify Thee, O my Jesus, illus-

trious Son of David, for the solemn reverence offered to Thee this day by the people of Israel, by whom Thou wast owned and acclaimed with shouts, as King and mighty Prophet.

I praise and honour Thee for Thy marvellous love, and Thy surpassing clemency, in that, of Thy own free will, Thou didst meekly place Thyself in the hands of those murderers, knowing that Thou wouldst shortly afterwards be put to death by them; and didst shed many tears for their sins and wickedness, when warning them how great were the woes which were so soon to follow their present rejoicings.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy burning zeal against transgressors of the Law, in that Thou didst straightway go into the Temple, and didst drive out from Thy Father's House those who sold and bought therein, and so were making the House of Prayer a den of thieves.

And as Thou didst show Thyself stern against the covetous and unrighteous, against men who were selling their own souls; so on the other hand didst Thou show Thyself tender and full of pity for the sick and poor, by graciously bestowing upon many of them Thy gifts of healing and of holy Doctrine.

O the unspeakable Power of Christ! O the surpassing Love of the Son of God! Who can declare Thy mighty acts, O Lord, or set forth all Thy praise? Remember me, O my Jesus, in the favour of Thy people, and visit me with Thy salvation! Come, my beloved Jesus, and lead me into the holy city of Jerusalem; not that Jerusalem which killed the prophets, but that Jerusalem which is above, whose inhabitants dwell together in unity. Ride, I pray Thee, upon that foal of an ass, the

light and wanton lusts of my flesh, by subduing them with the bridle of continence.

Good indeed it is for me to bear my Lord upon my back, and to be subject to His law; never to kick against the rule of obedience, but with patience and with gentleness to endure whatever burden may be laid upon me. For never must I cease from toil, or from spiritual progress; this way, and no other must I go; in this holy course must I proceed; if at length, by Thy merciful help and guidance, I am to reach the Heavenly Jerusalem, where there is peace for evermore.

Therefore, with the Hebrew children, I devoutly acclaim Thee, saying "Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna in the highest!" Hail King of all the world, Saviour of the House of Israel, Whose coming the Prophets had foretold since the beginning of the world, Whom the people of the Jews on this day joyfully greeted with their songs of praise.

I adore Thee, I glorify Thee, Who camest, in the Name of Thy Father, to redeem us from the hand of the enemy, and to reconcile us to God the Father by Thy own most precious Blood.

I pray Thee also, O Lord Jesus, to enter the temple of my heart. and to purge and to cast out thence, far from me, whatever Thou shalt find therein that is filthy and profane. Cast out, I pray Thee, from that which should be Thy tabernacle, all the many kinds of worldly cares, all the idols, whether of things, or of persons; overturn the tables of the money-changers, lest covetous lusts should lead me astray. Take away the noise of cattle and of doves, lest an abundance of things earthly should check my longing for things heavenly. Lay hold of the scourge, made of the small

cords of the fear of Thee, and with ceaseless vigour drive out, I pray Thee, all the fancies and foul imaginations which the devil, that most shameless of pedlars, is so often wont to spread out before me in Church, at the time of prayer; lest my soul, being sorely tempted, and led astray by the wiles of that deceiver, should be drawn into consent, and should be thereby choked. Make haste to help me, O most mighty Lord Jesus; suffer me not to be taken in the snares of the devil, or to be overcome of my own wickedness. Keep me from that which is evil, strengthen me in that which is good; that so I may escape the peril of eternal damnation, and may pass with Thee into the everlasting tabernacles of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXIII

Of the Lord's Supper, in which, after partaking of the Paschal Lamb, Christ Jesus instituted the Sacrament of His Own Body and Blood

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Bread of Life, and Fountain of the Water of Salvation, for the most Holy Feast of Thy Last Supper with Thy disciples, which with great desire Thou hadst long time desired to celebrate. At that Feast, Thou, O Lord, King of Heaven and of Earth, didst sup at the same table, and from the same dish, as Thy poor and humble disciples, and in the presence of the traitor Judas; and, during that supper Thou didst pour forth sweet words of holy exhortation, and didst strive by gentle warning, to turn back from his wicked purpose Judas himself.

I praise and glorify Thee for the measureless abundance of Thy wondrous love, in that, after eating of the Paschal lamb, that so Thou mightest fulfil the old Law, Thou didst for the first time celebrate the Sacrament of Thy own most precious Body and Blood, as a memorial of Thy Passion, and of Thy everlasting love for us. At that first Eucharist, Thou didst Thyself, with yearnings of intense devotion, deliver with Thy own ever-blessed Hands, the self-same Sacraments which we now receive to Thy disciples, to be eaten by them; and didst also at the same time make known the form of Its Consecration to be used by them, and by the Priests to be afterwards ordained by them; giving to them, and to their successors, full power to celebrate Mass, so long as the world shall last.

O matchless and wondrous outpouring of love! O the supreme generosity of the bounty of God,—the Giver coming into the Gift; the Gift being wholly the same with the Giver! O worthy and ever to be observed memorial, in which the faithful soul calls to mind that its own death has been put to death, and that in its Beloved, Whom it has received, it has found Life everlasting! O wonder of all wonders the most stupendous, O joy of all joys the greatest, to have God verily present with us, though hidden beneath the wondrous Sacrament; God, Whom the Holy Angels in Heaven adore, as infinitely above themselves, showing Himself to us under a form which all may look upon.

O my sweet Jesus, grant to me, I pray Thee, for the worthy reception of this most Holy Sacrament, a heart contrite for my sins; a conscience made pure in confession; a mind lifted up in prayer; firm faith, strong hope, and fervent

charity; devotion constraining to tears; reverence tempered by love; joy rejoicing in fear and inward thanksgiving; and that profound self-abasement, which can only come from the depths of a heart that knows its own vileness, and appeals for mercy, to the supreme height of Thy Divine Majesty.

CHAPTER XXIV

Of the Washing of the feet, and the sacred discourse of Jesus, at the Supper

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most highly exalted King of Saints, for that supreme example of deep humility and abject self-abasement, which Thou didst show forth, and leave to us for our imitation, when Thou, the most holy God, didst think no scorn of carefully washing, on Thy bended knees, and with Thy own ever-blessed Hands, of wiping, and of kissing, the feet of those poor fishermen, Thy humble followers: and, more than all this, didst also wash, with the same tender loving-kindness, the feet of Thy perfidious betrayer, although, ungrateful for all Thy benefits, foul within and unwashed, he went on still in his wickedness.

O wondrous tenderness of a Master to a disciple so hardened, O endearing complaisance of a most loving Lord to a servant who was utterly depraved, who was so case-hardened in his sin, that not even by Thy courtesy at the feast, nor by the gentleness of Thy menial service, nor by the sweetness of Thy discourse, could he be held back from his wicked purpose!

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy long reclining at the table of this most sacred Last Supper, at which Thou didst perform so many wondrous acts of love, that time would fail for their worthy recital.

I praise and glorify Thee, O Jesus, of Comforters the best, of Teachers the sweetest, of Helpers the most powerful, for that long, notable, and heavenly discourse, full of the fire of love, and sweet as a honey-comb, which, after the washing of the feet, and the departure of the traitor Judas, Thou didst, in words which all might understand, deliver to Thy disciples. By it Thou didst take pains to comfort and strengthen their sad hearts against the tribulations which were to come upon them, giving them a sure hope of Thy Resurrection, of their being strengthened by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and of their being received after this their exile into the heavenly mansions of Thy Father; adding moreover many most beautiful words. And at last, at the close of this sacred utterance, with a faithfulness that knew no bounds, Thou didst, in true union of heart, gather them all up in Thy commendation of them to God the Father, saying: "*O Father, I will that they may be all one, as we also are.*"

And hereupon Thou didst with Thy disciples enter a garden, apart from the busy hum of men, suited for private prayer, and there Thou didst prepare Thyself for Thy coming Agony, and Sacred Passion, speaking thus: "*Sit you here and watch with Me, till I go yonder, and pray.*"

I pray Thee now, O most loving Jesus, my Master and my Lord, that Thou wouldst grant to me who am the chiefest of sinners, and Thy unworthy servant, to meditate with recollected mind upon Thy words so heavenly, and upon Thy doings

so vividly set forth. Grant to me especially, I beseech Thee, to bow my most stubborn of necks to the doing of all work, no matter how humble, and to the fulfilment of all duties, no matter how servile; utterly to overcome my pride and false shame, that so I may learn to spend myself in the loving service, not only of my fellow-religious, and of my friends, but also of those who are repulsive to me from defects of mind or body. May I never think it a great matter to have to ask pardon for my shortcomings, when Thou, my God, wast not ashamed to bend Thy most sacred knees in the presence of Thy disciples, and to wash their feet. Taught, as I am, by Thy example, help me to carry into act what I hear and read of Thee.

But because I am at all points full of faults, and stained with all kinds of evil propensities, I need to be cleansed from my sins by a washing of exceeding thoroughness. To Thee, therefore, do I stretch forth my hands; and with the knees of my heart humbly bent before Thee, I pray Thee that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to wash carefully and thoroughly, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head; for in many ways have I sinned against Thee, by thought and by speech, both in what I have done and in what I have left undone.

Wash me, therefore, O my Jesus, from all the filth of my sins, cleanse me from every defilement, whether of body or of soul; that so, being made clean from head to foot, I may be found meet to have part with Thee, in that everlasting joy, which Thou hast promised to all Thy loved ones, who in times of temptation have held fast to Thee.

Give me also, I pray Thee, an understanding heart, that I may be able fully to comprehend that most sweet discourse, which Thou didst speak

at the Supper: for its words are indeed words breathing love most fervent, comfort the sweetest, and wisdom the most exalted. So write Thy new commandment upon the tables of my heart, that my soul may be on fire with the twofold love which it enjoins: strengthen me in every trouble that may come upon me, and in place of this world's joys, fill me with the most sweet comfort of Thy Holy Spirit.

Give me that true peace of heart, which the world cannot give; give me the Spirit, the Paraclete, Whom the world seeth not, neither knoweth. Come, O Lord Jesus, and deign to make Thy abode with me, that Thou in me, and I in Thee, we may dwell together in one.

TREATISE I

PART II

OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

PART II

CHAPTER I

Of the selling of Jesus by the perfidious traitor Judas

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, of Goodness supreme, of Majesty eternal, for the wicked sale of Thee by Thy own disciple, by whom Thou wast sold for so paltry and mean a price as thirty pieces of silver.

I praise and glorify Thee for the surpassing meekness of Thy forbearance with that treacherous disciple, in that not only wast Thou not moved to anger, or to the use of harsh words, against him, but also (albeit Thou knewest the treachery against Thee which he was so soon to perpetrate) didst not at once make known his villainy to his fellow-disciples, nor didst suspend him from Holy Communion.

O most gentle Lord Jesus, how great is Thy patience, how great my impatience!

Woe is me that I find it so hard to bear with my brother, if aught is said or done to me which

I do not like. Thou didst for so long a time uncomplainingly bear with Thy disciple Judas, who was shortly to sell and betray Thee: whereas I, for some slight wrong, fly at once into a passion, and concoct all sorts of plans for revenging or excusing myself. At such a time what becomes of my meekness, and of my patience?

Help me, O good Jesus, I beseech Thee, and instil into my heart more and more fully the virtue of Thy gentleness; for without Thy special grace preventing me, I cannot have the blessing of quietness of soul amidst the worries and the troubles, of which in this life there are so many.

CHAPTER II

Of the sadness and dread which Jesus endured for our sakes

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Maker and Redeemer of all the faithful, for the sad beginning of Thy most bitter Passion; for the exceeding distress of Thy soul; for the anxiety and dread, which, in the weakness of Thy human Nature, taken upon Thee of Thy own free will for our sakes, Thou didst feel, when, as the hour of Thy betrayal drew nigh, Thou didst begin to be fearful and very sad. Nor didst Thou think shame of confessing this sadness to Thy disciples, for Thou saidst: "*My soul is sorrowful even unto death.*" O wondrous dispensation of God! Thou, the Lord of all power, Who but a short while since hadst given strength to Thy disciples for the strife, dost now bear Thyself as One Who is weak, and wanting in strength and courage.

And all this Thou didst undergo in order the more perfectly to comfort us in weakness and faint-heartedness, lest perchance some one of us, when sorely tempted, should despair of pardon or salvation; for if such an one should feel himself less cheerful than he should be under suffering, less brave than he should be, in enduring trials of the flesh, he may still be able to say that which Thou art recorded to have said: "*Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*"

O most loving Jesus, my only hope in every trouble and distress, make me, I pray Thee, to ponder with a heart full of compassion, the sorrowful beginning of this Thy blessed Passion, and from this sad prelude to go on by degrees to meditate upon the still more bitter parts of it, that so I may be able, from each several part, to gather for the wounds of my soul some healing medicine.

Grant that I may bear with patient courage, for the glory of Thy Name, whatever troubles may be awaiting me, that I may never fall into despair, no matter how severe the tribulation may be, but may in all things resign myself to the good pleasure of Thy Divine Providence.

CHAPTER III

The thrice-repeated prayer, the prostration before the Father of the Lord Jesus, and the resignation by Him of His Own Will

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Stay of Angels, Refuge of the distressed, for Thy agonizing prayer, and Thy lowly falling flat upon the ground; when thrice, upon Thy bended

knees, Thou didst earnestly and devoutly beseech Thy Heavenly Father that, if it were possible, the Chalice of Thy Passion might pass from Thee, and yet didst ever add the words: "*Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*"

I praise and glorify Thee, for Thy mighty struggle against the fear of death, and of the anguish of Thy most bitter Passion; when the flame of Divine Love burnt so fiercely within Thee, as to thrust out all human fear.

I praise Thee, and give thanks to Thee, for the copious shedding of Thy Sweat of Blood; when, being in an Agony, Thou didst pray yet more fervently; and, against the order of nature, didst give out from Thy body, as sweat, drops of blood.

I adore Thee, and give Thee glory, for Thy humble acceptance of the angelic consolation, which Thou, the Maker and the King of the Heavenly Host, for the more strengthening of our feebleness, didst not disdain to receive at the hands of Angels: that so, weaklings as we are, we may be led to seek, not the comfort which is but for a moment, but that true strength which comes from above.

O most sweet Jesus, with what fervour of Love must Thou have loved me, that Thou didst pray for me so earnestly as to give forth—in Thy great desire to suffer for me—in place of natural sweat, Thy Own warm Blood, trickling down upon the ground.

O Almighty Creator of my soul, and perfect Pattern of my life, I praise Thee, and magnify Thee for ever, for Thy boundless resignation; and for Thy complete conquest of Thy Own Will, and of all Thy feelings as a Man, which would have made Thee shrink from pain and death. I praise and magnify Thee for having at once, without the

least wavering, when the hour of Thy Passion was at hand, resigned Thyself freely and willingly to Thy Father's Will, saying: "*Father, not my will, but Thine, be done.*" Words indeed these were, with which Thou didst magnify Thy Heavenly Father's glory: didst heap further benefits upon us; didst yet more firmly tread the devil under foot; and didst show forth, to those who believe in Thee, more plainly than ever before, the model of perfection, the ensign of salvation, and the path of the highest virtue.

O adorable Jesus, Thou Whose example we must ever keep before us, grant, I most earnestly beseech Thee, that I may obtain the fruit of this Thy thrice-repeated prayer, and that in the life in Religion which I have taken upon myself, I may strive to imitate the example of Thy self-denial. Give me grace manfully to bring into subjection to the spirit the stubbornness of my flesh; to crush all shrinking from bodily pain; to use prayer more often than before; to be ever watchful therein; to trust lovingly to Thee for help; to leave confidently in Thy hands the issue of all my undertakings; utterly to renounce my own will in everything; and to be always ready courageously to bear whatever troubles may come upon me.

CHAPTER IV

How the Lord Jesus went to meet His betrayer

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Deliverer, for Thy cheerful readiness to suffer; in that, after Thou hadst offered to God the Father Thy thrice-repeated

prayer, when Thy most cruel enemies, and Judas, Thy most wicked betrayer, came, in the dead of night, with a great multitude, with swords and clubs, and torches and weapons, to take Thee, as if Thou hadst been a robber, Thou didst at once Thyself go forth to meet them, saying: "*Whom seek ye? I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way.*" At which first word indeed of Thy power all that arrogant boldness of theirs was discomfited, and utterly put to confusion. For, as soon as Thou hadst said this unto them, they went backwards and fell to the ground. What then would have happened if, at Thy bidding, twelve legions of angels had come upon them? But it was to suffer that Thou hadst come into the world, and so, instead of using Thy Divine power, Thou didst will to show forth Thy most gracious forbearance. Thou hadst made plain, by one short word, the Majesty of Thy power: and now Thou didst allow those impious men to have dominion over Thee, and to wreak their venomous spite against Thee for a season; that so Thou mightest make it plain that it was of Thy own free will that Thou wast entering upon Thy Passion, for the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, and for the fulfilment of the Scriptures of the Prophets.

I praise and glorify Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most innocent Lamb of God, for Thy unspeakable gentleness, and for Thy invincible spirit of meekness, in that Thou wast not inflamed with anger against Thy most wicked betrayer, and didst not indignantly turn Thy back upon him, but rather didst deign to enter into friendly conversation with him; and addressing him with Thy wonted kindness, didst suffer him, unworthy as he was, to kiss

Thy most sweet Lips, saying to him: "*Friend, whereto art thou come?*"—rebuking at the same time his wicked and deceitful insolence with those gentle words: "*Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*" He, alas! who had been one of the company of Thy apostles, neither fearing Thee as his Judge, nor pitying Thee as his friend, shrank not from his most horrible villainy; but putting himself at tha head of that band of evil men, gave them a sign, saying: "*Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, hold Him fast.*" O vilest disciple of a Master most loving! O servant most perfidious of a Master most faithful!

O how wonderful was Thy love, how splendid was that patience of Thine, O most meek, most loving Jesus, Who even at the time of such an arrest, of so base a betrayal, didst not forget Thy old friendship and tenderness! Thou didst repay so great a wrong by bestowing a gift of healing; making whole, by the touch of Thy sacred Hand, the ear of the High Priest's servant which Thy disciple had cut off, and bidding Peter himself, when he would have protected Thee from Thy assailants, to hold his hand, saying: "*Put up again thy sword into its place. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? For thus it must be.*"

Now, therefore, O my God, I beseech Thee to give to me, frail reed that I am, greater patience when things go wrong with me; and when my enemies insult me, or when charges are brought against me, of which I know myself to be innocent, let not sudden anger get the better of me, nor a love of revenge stir me up to render railing for railing. Grant me grace not to shrink from being found fault with; but to take reproaches in good

part, and to think him my friend who blames or disparages me the most. Give me grace not to feel angry at any harshness shown me, and not to bear malice for any unjust complaint made against me; but to let the thought of Thy most gentle endurance of the wrongs done to Thee strengthen me to rejoice in my own, and fill me with a desire to suffer even worse things for love of Thee.

CHAPTER V

The fell seizure and leading away of the Lord Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Hope of the Saints, and their strong Tower in every distress, for the violent seizure of Thee by Thy hateful enemies; for the insolent laying upon Thee of the sacrilegious hands of those who sought to hold Thee; for the fierce looks they cast upon Thee; for the threatening shouts of the soldiers; for their rough and cruel binding of Thee; for their rude and ungentle holding of Thee fast; for their hasty and disorderly leading away of Thee; for the contumely and the violence with which they dragged Thee along; when, with wild tumult, Thou wast hurried away by vile and worthless scoundrels to Thy death; while the disciples, who were so dear to Thee, either fled, or with eyes full of grief and sorrow looked upon Thee from afar.

O King of Kings, O Lord Who rulest over all Thy creatures, and alone among mortals art free, how couldst Thou bear to be thus violently seized

by evil hands, and to be led away in such contumely and disgrace, by men whom Thou hadst Thyself created, and to whom Thou hadst always done good? Alas! how grievous was the crime committed against Thee, how audacious the insult to Thy sovereign Majesty, when Thou, the Deliverer of souls, wast bound with a malefactor's cord; when Thou, Who wast altogether free from sin, wast led away a prisoner, as if Thou hadst been the vilest of robbers! But Thou, my most loving Jesus, supreme Author of all virtues, didst will to endure all these things most patiently for our sakes, that so Thou mightest set us an example of perfect meekness, and mightest fulfil that most plain of the prophecies of Isaias: "*He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth. He was offered because it was His own will.*"

Compassionate, then, O my soul, thy most loving Lord God, an ill-used prisoner, enduring of His own free will all these things because of thy sins. Groan deeply, and let thine eyes be wet with tears of sorrow, at the thought of the Only-Begotten Son of God being treated with such indignity for thy sake. See what those most insolent dogs, the wicked Jews, are doing. They hold Jesus captive, they lead Him bound before Annas, and before Caiaphas the High Priest: but when He is seized He does not resist; when He is bound He does not complain; when He is led away He does not struggle with His captors; when He is being dragged along He utters no ill-word; but He goes meekly on, is quiet as a lamb, follows His captors as One Who is guiltless, bears everything as One Who is humility itself.

I pray Thee, then, O my God, that the thought

of the bitterness of the grievous restraint thus put upon Thee may sink deep into my heart; may often rouse me, and chiefly at the hour of Matins, to fervour in the Divine Office; may drive from me all listlessness; and may make me constant, active, and watchful, in praising Thee, that so I may at least make some return for Thy love, and for the hardships endured by Thee, Who, for my sake, at night-time wast born, and at night-time wast betrayed, wast seized, and wast bound with cords. At night-time, therefore, O Lord, will I ever remember Thy Holy Name, calling to mind what great things Thou hast suffered for me, the chief of sinners.

May Thy painful bonds win for me true liberty, may they hold me back from unprofitable wandering abroad, and by strong discipline keep me ever in Thy service. May I not find it hard to overcome and get rid of self; and may I with a willing heart follow along the path of obedience the injunctions of my superiors, not shrinking from being led whither I would not, provided only that the command be such as is pleasing to Thee. May I never be found rebellious, quarrelsome, insolent, or noisy; but always kind, tractable and sober-minded; that so I may walk in the way of Thy commandments, and with humble devotion may observe the rites and ceremonies of Holy Church. Bow Thou down my neck to observe the rules of my Order, and bind my hands to fulfil the holy toil assigned to me. May roaming and idleness ever be distasteful to me; stiff-necked and self-willed as I am by nature, may an austere life, and the subdual of my own inclinations be made to me my greatest happiness; and may I have grace to bring my own inner life, at least in

some small measure, into conformity with the example which Thou didst set, when Thou wast bound, and held captive.

CHAPTER VI

The forsaking of the Lord Jesus, and the flight of the Apostles

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, good Shepherd and gracious Master, for Thy most sad abandonment and for Thy loneliness, in the extremity of Thy need; when Thou wast left, by all Thy disciples and friends, quite alone in the midst of Thy most cruel enemies. For Thy brethren, and Thy familiar friends—who had promised to die, and to give their lives, for Thee—when the need came, one and all forsook Thee, and fled.

I praise and glorify Thee, for that tenderness of Heart, which caused Thee to suffer so cruelly from the cowardice with which Thy disciples turned their backs on Thee and deserted Thee, when leaving Thee their Shepherd in the midst of wolves, they were dispersed like sheep, every one to his own, even as Thou hadst foretold to them. Great indeed must have been the sadness, great indeed the anguish and the grief, which possessed the hearts of the disciples when they beheld their Lord and Master, Whom they had left all to follow, so violently torn from them, and hurried away to death. But Thou, O Lord, to Whom all things are known, and Who dost not allow anything to happen without its fulfilling some purpose of Thy

own, didst permit these chosen vessels of Thine to show such great weakness in order that out of it greater good might come. From this fall, in short, it was that they were led to know their own frailty, and to sympathize with that of other weak brethren; and so ever afterwards they remained more distrustful of themselves, more fervent in spirit, more humble and more devout.

How useful is it for me to meditate diligently upon this subject, and never to think too highly of myself; for although when in prayer I do sometimes have the grace of renewed fervour, yet I know not how long it will last, nor what may be in store for me in time of temptation. If the pillars of heaven, the Apostles of Christ, gave way in time of tribulation, what is a most frail and unprofitable weakling likely to do, when even a slight temptation assails him? Some indeed, O Lord, would cry shame upon Thy holy Apostles for their base desertion of Thee, and because, being beside themselves from fear, they tried to escape; but such men forget what an everyday thing it is for them to go astray under the stress of love or hate, as the case may be.

Do not, then, I pray Thee, my most dear Lord, suffer me to fall a victim to so great spiritual madness, as ever to turn aside from any holy purpose which I have taken in hand; and grant me grace to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest, be it to life or to death. May I never forsake Thee in time of adversity, nor be drawn away by my own lusts so as to fall into sin; but may I rather, for the love of Thee, and in pursuit of what is good, play the man, by remaining firm under straits and hardships, of whatever kind; lest, at any time, through my own fault, I should come to

lose Thee, my Highest Good. Let not the foot of pride come against me as concerning any good works done by me, nor let me ever join Peter in speaking presumptuously, putting myself before some one else, or claiming to be as good as others; but may I do everything in Thy fear, humbly remembering my own weakness. May the fall of holy Peter, and the flight of the apostles, be no stumbling-block to me; but may these things rather be a warning against sin. May the restoration of Thy apostles to Thy favour, which followed upon their repentance, give me a strong hope of again obtaining mercy after a fall of my own—for there is no one so holy as never to fall into venial sin of some kind—and when it so happens that my friends and acquaintances turn away from me, or those whom I love well think evil of me, and treat me as one who is of no account, and as it were a stranger to them; then, O Lord, grant that I may, for my own comfort, keep in mind Thy most grievous desertion and rejection, and count it gain to be deprived of all human consolation, if only I may thereby, in my small degree, be conformed to what Thou hadst to undergo.

Forgive me, O most merciful Jesus, for having so often offended Thee; for having been so ready to go astray after that which has profited me nothing; for not having kept my heart steadfastly fixed upon that which I had resolved to do. Also, when I consider my ways, how often do I find that I waste my time upon vain things which can never profit, and fail, alas, in keeping Thy sacred Passion ever in my view! Thou hast trodden the narrow way before me, and I pass by without a tear, as if Thy anguish were no concern of mine. Take pity, I pray Thee, upon my cold dull heart,

and fill it with a loving remembrance of Thy most bitter Passion.

CHAPTER VII

The arraignment of the Lord Jesus before Annas, the Priest

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Guide of our life, and Author of our salvation, for Thy first arraignment before Annas, the Priest, where Thou wast questioned about many things, and in return for Thy meek and truthful answer, wast rudely smitten on the cheek.

I praise and magnify Thee, my glorious King Jesus Christ, for the dishonour thus done to Thee, and for the shameful blow which Thou didst receive from the hand of an insolent servant, when in return for Thy answer he gave Thee a heavy blow upon Thy face, saying: "*Answerest Thou the High Priest so?*" And even after all this Thou didst not fail, O most gentle Jesus, undisturbed in mind or speech, meekly to make answer to him again, saying: "*If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?*" O most vile and impious servant, how was it that thou didst not fear to strike the Face of Thy Creator, deserving of all love, with thy guilty hands! How unspeakable, my adorable Jesus, was the virtue of meekness which shone forth in Thee, when, instead of avenging so insulting a blow with immediate chastisement, Thou didst calmly expostulate with him who struck Thee!

Bethink thee now, O Christian, and say whether, for love of Jesus, thou couldest endure a slap in

the face. Thou who canst not bear a hard word without losing thy temper, how couldst thou bear to be smitten on the mouth? Thou dost grieve over the uncalled for violence offered to thy Lord; but much more sad, surely, is it that thou shouldst be so little able to endure, for Christ's sake, even trivial wrongs. Thou makest grand resolutions, thy ideals are lofty; but the first reproachful word upsets thee, and thou findest thyself weaker than thou hadst thought thyself to be. Flee then to Jesus, and pray Him more earnestly than ever before to give thee the virtue of patience.

O good Jesus, Thou strength and stay of the troubled soul, teach me to bear, with an even mind, blame and reproach; teach me, when complaints are unjustly made against me, not angrily to fight against them, but rather to get the better of them by meekly holding my peace; or, if speech be needed, may my words be such as to make of my adversaries friends. Put a right and loving word into my mouth in the presence of those that set themselves against me; and, when the hand of the wicked is lifted up against me, give me, O most gentle Jesus, for my impregnable shield, modest and imperturbable calmness of mind.

CHAPTER VIII

Of Blessed Peter, the Apostle's, thrice-repeated denial

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Who knowest all things before they come to pass, for having warned Thy over-confident disciple Peter, by foretelling to him his fall.

I glorify Thee for the anguish of Thy Soul at the grievous dishonour brought upon Thee by the thrice-repeated denial of Thee by Peter the apostle, when, to the challenge of a woman, he made answer in the words: "*I know not the man.*"

I praise and magnify Thy Name for ever, for that gentle look which Thou didst mercifully vouchsafe to cast upon blessed Peter, that so, immediately upon the second crowing of the cock, he might be brought to a sense of his guilt; and going out at once from among those wicked men, might mourn with bitter tears, and with deep contrition of heart, his terrible sin of denying Thee.

He indeed did not, like wretched Judas, fall hopelessly into the pit of despair; but saved by Thy unspeakable mercy, and trusting to Thy boundless store of pity and loving-kindness, of which he had so often felt the tenderness, he sought at once with bitter lamentations that wholesome medicine of penance, which Thou hast provided for the healing of the disease of sin, and found set open wide before him the gate of infinite mercy.

O the surpassing love and pity of the Saviour! How inexhaustible is that fountain of Divine Mercy and overflowing grace, which has been opened to us; to which the sinner may always resort in the sure hope of being forgiven, and the just of always finding therein abundant stores of grace! Would to God, then, that I might always have ready such a fountain of tears, that, like blessed Peter, I might be sure of worthily bewailing my sins, and of obtaining, by the help of his merits and intercession, the pardon which they need, and the grace which I have lost. Peter, indeed, fell because, in fear of death, he thrice denied the truth; but I, on the slightest cause, daily swerve from the path

of virtue, and in many things sin against eternal truth. Peter, when he fell, rose again at once: I, alas, fall more easily than he did, but my recovery is not so swift; seldom do I bewail my sins; careless is the watch I keep over myself; I shun not danger as I ought. Peter shed bitter tears of repentance; taught by his fall he avoided occasions of sin; he sought for a secret place wherein to weep; and, by prayers full of holy grief, he washed away the stains which his careless words had brought upon his soul. How fruitful is the tear, which so soon blots out the sins we have committed, and by means of which even grace, which has been lost, may be recovered.

Holy Peter, remember me, and have pity upon me, a poor weak sinner, entangled in the snare of many evil lusts; that so by thy intercession I may be kept from being overwhelmed by the burden of my sins, and from giving way to despair at the thought of the punishment they have deserved. Thou, above all other Saints, canst sympathize with the fallen, and knowest full well how great was the mercy with which the Lord helped thee.

Come then, kind shepherd, to the help of a poor sheep which has gone astray; take out of the slough one who has fallen into it, comfort one who is sad, give courage to one who is faint-hearted; defend him from the adversary, keep him from every snare laid for him; and bring with thee, to that happy kingdom above, of which thou art a prince and the door-keeper, the soul of a brother for which Christ died.

And now, with sighs, which come from the bottom of my heart, I beseech Thee, O most kind and merciful Lord Jesus, to turn upon me those

loving Eyes, with which Thou didst look upon Peter after he had denied Thee, and to grant me speedily the grace of holy contrition; that so I may be cleansed from all the sins, whether deliberate or indeliberate, which I have committed against Thee. Listen to the groans of my heart; heal the wounds of my evil conscience; give me once more the light of Thy grace; and keep from perishing a penitent soul, for the redemption of which Thou wast content to endure such anguish, such insults, and in the end the cruel death of the Cross.

CHAPTER IX

The leading away of the Lord Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas the Priest, and the Lord's standing before him

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Chief Priest, and Perpetual High Priest, for Thy contemptuous leading away from the house of Annas to that of Caiaphas the High Priest, where the Scribes and Elders were gathered together to take cruel counsel against Thee. Ah! with what unholy joy were they filled, when they saw Thee Whom they had long wished to seize, but could not, because Thy hour was not yet come, brought before them as a prisoner. But this is their hour, and the power of darkness, permitted them by God that they might fill to the brim the cup of hate which they had so long been maturing against Thee; and might now at length openly give effect—to Thy honour and glory indeed, and for the salvation of the faithful, but for the eternal damnation of unbelievers—to their inveterate malice.

I praise and glorify Thee, adorable Jesus, for so modestly standing before the High Priest and all the Elders of the people, who were impudently staring at that Face of Thine, which is deserving of all love. Grievous charges were, by the falsest of witnesses, laid against Thee; the High Priest asked Thee many questions, adjuring Thee to answer truthfully; and at last, on a charge of blasphemy, Thou wast by them all, with loud voice, declared to be guilty of death.

I praise and magnify Thee, most noble Jesus, for each and every insult and falsehood levelled against Thee; for the lowly deference, and the silence, which Thou didst for so long a time maintain amidst the wicked charges of Thy accusers; at all which Thou madest no sign of murmur or complaint, but didst set before us all an example of perfect gentleness.

Ponder, then, O loving follower of Christ, and lay seriously to heart, how great was the splendour of the lowly patience of Jesus under suffering! See what shameful reproaches He has to bear, Whose praises are sung by the heavenly hosts! For His truthful answer to the High Priest's question He is condemned as a blasphemer. And yet, assuredly, all those who so condemn Him, proclaim themselves blasphemers, and guilty of an awful and stupendous crime. In the madness of their hearts, not believing Him to be the Son of God, they wreak upon the Lord Jesus villainies of every kind; but He bears all in silence; and the more He allows Himself to be trodden under foot of the ungodly, the greater is His victory, the greater is His triumph over them.

Cease, therefore, O faithful soul, from thy passionate murmurings at reproaches cast upon thee,

and from wishing to retaliate, and to be avenged, upon thy adversaries. Bow down thy back to sustain the burden of the earthly trials which come upon thee; nor seek to prosper in a world, in which Christ was content to be despised. Blush, thou proud one, at thy honours, thy high places, thy magnificent retinue, and thy fine clothing; seeing that for thee Christ was content to be absolutely poor. A disgrace it surely is for thee to covet the favours of men, and to hanker after earthly pleasures; for such desires are utterly at variance with a true following of Christ.

O most adorable Jesus, most meek, altogether lovely, grant to me, a miserable sinner, the grace of Thy favour, and teach me, by Thy shining example, not to be afraid of the threats and insults of the wicked, and not to be distressed at being unjustly accused; but rather to pray for the forgiveness of those who have wronged me, and to submit myself in all humility to Thee, and to my superiors; that so the gifts of Thy love may be more abundantly shed forth upon me, and I may have grace to praise Thee more earnestly for those already received.

CHAPTER X

The insults, the mockings, and the smitings of the Head, of the Lord Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Crown and Glory of the Saints, for the grievous contempt, and the foul insults to which Thou wast subjected, when, after Thou hadst been

condemned to death, Thou wast so shamefully abused, and mocked with so many disgraceful words, by hard-hearted menials, and wast moreover frequently and roughly smitten on the head and face by them.

Oh, the thought that Thy altogether lovely countenance, upon which Angels delight to look, should be basely dishonoured by the filthy spitting of Jews, and be violently buffeted by the palms of their hands! Nor can we doubt that tears from Thy eyes mingled abundantly with the blood which was flowing from Thy nostrils. Thy beauteous neck is sorely bruised by the blows rained upon it by the fists of those who smite Thee. Those Eyes of Thine, clear as crystal, which are ever over the righteous, are blindfolded in derision, like the eyes of fools. Thy adorable Head, exalted far above all creatures, is rudely struck by the polluted hands of sinners; and with mocking shouts they insult Thee, saying: "*Prophecy unto us, O Christ! Who is he that struck Thee?*"

Who, O Lord, can hear of the indignities thus heaped upon Thee without being moved to deep sorrow and anguish of heart? Of a truth Thy capacity for suffering far surpasses ours; but the hearts of those who love Thee cannot but be deeply wounded at the thought of all the shame and disgrace which Thou hadst to undergo. From Thy friends Thou wast estranged; by Thy followers Thou wast deserted; Thou wast made a scoff and derision to them that hated Thee without a cause, who winked at Thee with their eyes. Ah, my Lord and my God, how canst Thou suffer Thyself, as if Thou wert the most foolish of men, to be thus mocked, and spitted on and buffeted by the ungodly? Those raging Jews! All that night

did they spend in mocking and in striking Thee; and by the time they had glutted themselves with Thy sufferings, they had so disfigured Thy Countenance, that scarce anyone would have known Thee: and yet, all the while, Thy unspeakable gentleness was unfailing, and although Thy impious tormentors could not discern it, the incomparable beauty of Thy Soul was unchanged. To all Thy chosen ones, however, Thou hast become still fairer and more precious, because, by the eye of faith, they recognize Thee as the most High God, and know that for love of them, all innocent as Thou wert, Thou didst suffer all these things.

I pray Thee, O most patient Jesus, that Thou wouldst teach me, in my meditation on the surpassing insults heaped upon Thee, to realize my own vileness, and how by my sins I have richly deserved to be despised, and to be condemned amidst the scoffs and hisses of my fellow men. Pity my shortcomings, and strengthen me to bear harsh words spoken to me, even when I blush for shame at their violence. For Thou, because Thou wast supremely humble, didst on behalf of me, a contemptible sinner, endure, without complaining, and with supreme meekness, many despiteful words, besides bonds and stripes. Oh how unlike Thee am I; how far from being truly humble am I, who for some trifling wrong or inconsiderate word, am angry with my fellow man; and, whereas I ought to be grateful for a reproof which was good for me, lose heart and feel impatient, and make no use of it!

Forgive, O Lord, I pray Thee, these my misdoings, and pardon my having so often offended Thee by my follies, my not having kept a pure conscience in my heart, and my not having shown

towards Thee, and towards my fellow men, due humility and respect. Give me wholesome sorrow, and a fount of tears. Make me to welcome discipline, calling to mind the blows which Thou didst endure. Grant that even from the harshest charges brought against me, I may, by patience under them, win profit to my soul; and may, from my hearts of hearts, feel that I deserve to be looked down upon and put to shame.

May the thought of the hard smiting of Thy Head help me to bear my own bodily pain, of whatever kind it be; may the thought of the scornful blindfolding of Thine Eyes check the curiosity of mine; may the thought of the filthy spitting upon Thy beauteous Countenance repress within me every fleshly lust; and may it teach me not to be dazzled by outward glitter, but to cultivate more earnestly than ever, the inward graces of the soul. May the thought of the mocking which Thou hadst to bear make me shrink from all levity of behaviour, and from all foolish jesting; and may the thought of the utter setting at naught of Thy Majesty quench in me all desire of being made much of, and lead me rather to seek a mean and lowly state. Amen.

CHAPTER XI

The arraignment, and the standing, of the Lord Jesus before Pilate

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most just Judge both of the living and of the dead, for the disorderly and noisy arraignment of Thee before Pilate, the Governor. For indeed,

when morning was come, at the hour of Prime, the Chief Priests, having come together, and taken wicked counsel how they might put Thee to death, and having caused their attendants to bind Thee with cords, brought Thee before a man uncircumcised, a heathen Governor; and making against Thee, innocent as Thou wert, the most grievous charges, dared to proclaim Thee, Whom the holy Prophets of old had hymned as the Saviour of the world, a malefactor, and a perverter of their nation.

How dreadful was the wickedness of those Jews in seeking, upon the testimony of witnesses who were perjured, the condemnation of One Who was innocent; in compassing the death of the Author of life; in urging the crucifixion of Christ their King, and the putting to the most shameful of deaths of the Holy One and the Just. May all Thy enemies, O Lord, be confounded, and put to shame; for they deserve far worse punishments than those which they meted out to Thee.

I praise and glorify Thee, adorable Jesus, for Thy perfect demeanour, and for the deference shown by Thee, when Thou wast standing before the tribunal of Pilate, Thy judge; for Thou didst stand bound with cords, like a most meek lamb, in the presence of Thy accusers; with Thy Head bent down; with Thy Eyes fixed upon the ground; with Thy Face calm; speaking but few words, and those in a soft voice; content to bear reproach, and even blows.

Behold, then, and lay to heart, O devout disciple of Christ, how Thy Lord and Saviour, Who is the King and Judge of all men, submitting Himself humbly, and of His own free-will, to the secular power, allows Himself to be taken before the judgement-seat—in all which He has set before

thee an example, that thou, too, who in so many ways art verily guilty, mayest learn to accuse thyself in Chapter, and to bear patiently being denounced by thy brethren. Submit thyself humbly to the judgement of thy Superiors; nor, if thou wouldst escape the pains of hell, venture to resist the power which is ordained of God: but, for the love of Jesus bear patiently an unjust condemnation, even if the punishment imposed be severe. Let not the thought of the patience of thy God—a patience shown when so many false charges were brought against Him—pass from thee without leaving its mark upon thy heart. Fall, then, at the sacred Feet of Jesus bound with cords, and plead for pardon and grace; entreat His forgiveness for all thy negligences, and that He will correct, in this thy mercy's day, thy offences, rather than, by reserving their punishment, cast thee out for ever with the reprobates.

Have mercy upon me, O good Jesus, have mercy upon me; for my soul trusteth in Thee. Breathe into me a right spirit, such as may kindle in me a fervent longing for progress in the inner life; that so I may strive with all my heart to humble myself, to give way and to submit to my superiors, and to bear all the burdens laid upon me. Grant that I may not stand in awe of men's judgements, and may not angrily defend myself against charges brought against me; but rather may love to be kept in order, to be censured, and punished; that so, the swellings of my pride being utterly trodden under foot, and my own will entirely brought into subjection, I may, by despising myself, come to love Thee more and more, and may be carried further and further onward on the road to Heaven.

CHAPTER XII

How the Lord Jesus was set at nought by Herod

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal Wisdom of the Father; Thou Who art Truth itself, and the Infinite Power of God; for the foul insolence and bitter mockery, with which Thou wast mocked and derided by Herod and his soldiers. For indeed Herod had himself of a long time been desirous to see Thee; and, moved by curiosity, was hoping to see some sign wrought by Thee. But when, to his questioning in many words, Thou answeredst nothing, and didst work no sign—the time not being fit for so doing, because it was Thy hour for suffering, not for working miracles—soon, being moved to anger, he ceased to pay Thee respect, and treating Thee as a madman, insolently set Thee at nought; and having mocked Thee, by clothing Thee in a white garment, sent Thee back to Pilate.

I praise and magnify Thee, my glorious Jesus, for the fatigues Thou didst endure in being hurried about, as they led Thee, with shouts of derision, backwards and forwards, from place to place, through the streets and lanes of Jerusalem, from Judge to Judge; before each of whom they defamed and grievously maligned Thee; and of whom at length, after Thou hadst been long time examined and questioned, they demanded Thy punishment by crucifixion.

O how brightly shone forth in Thee at this time the patience, which was unmoved when goaded by mockings such as Thine. Surely the thought

of Thy open setting at nought cannot but touch deeply the hardest heart; cannot but assuage the wrath of the angriest; cannot but bring tears to the eyes of those who love Thee! Thou, the most High God, art brought as low as the lowest of mankind; Thou, the Almighty One, art rejected as one of no account; Thou, the All-Wise, art derided as a fool; Thou, the All-Holy, art adjudged to be the wickedest of men!

Woe to me, a miserable sinner, lying under a heavy burden of sin; for so far as my own merits are concerned I have deserved endless torments; and I must have passed to them, hadst not Thou, my loving, holy, and just God, vouchsafed to be mocked and despised, in order to save me, wretch as I am, from the mockings of the devil and his angels, and from everlasting death.

I beseech Thee, therefore, All-powerful Jesus, Whom no malignant, no contemptuous words could provoke, that Thou wouldst root out from me all vanity and daintiness, and that Thou wouldst give me grace to be content with poor clothing; for it is a shameful thing that one, who is but dust and ashes, should wish to be clothed in handsome or soft garments, when Thou, the King of Heaven, wast content to be set at nought in a white garment. Keep ever before my eyes the shame and the derision which Thou hadst to endure; teach me to follow Thee in willingness to be set at naught, and to be glad to be despised; teach me not to put my trust in the sons of men, nor in the princes of this world, nor in what friends can do for me; teach me to despise all earthly good, and those who run after it; to follow, with a steadfastness from which nothing can turn me, Thee, O Lord Jesus, the Author of my salvation; and ever to

keep in remembrance the reproach which Thou didst endure for my sake, who am unworthy of the least of all Thy mercies.

CHAPTER XIII

Concerning the savage clamour of the Jews,— "Away with Him! Crucify Him!"

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, perpetual Joy of Saints, for the great and insolent uproar with which the Jews raged against Thee, crying out in their fury:—"*Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!*" Alas, how great was the savagery of those miserable Jews; how inhuman was the cruelty of the Priests and of the Pharisees, who felt no fear at putting Thee to death, who felt no compunction at shedding innocent blood! The heathen Judge is moved to some sort of pity; but the hearts of the Jews are hardened to yet more cruel malice. Pilate would discharge Thee, he seeks to release Thee, he declares that he finds no cause of death in Thee; but the Jews, forgetting all the good works Thou hadst wrought among them, will not listen to him, crying out again:—"*If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: for whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar.*"

Alas, with what utter falseness do they allege these things against Thee, Who never, either by word or deed, soughtest earthly honours; Who, when the people—whom, by working a miracle, Thou hadst fully satisfied with food—were anxious to make Thee a King, didst at once go forth alone to a mountain to pray, and to hide Thyself from them!

Nor are these lies enough for them; they go on to add still worse, seeking at any cost to force the Judge to put to death Him Who is very God. "*We have a law,*" they say, "*and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*" When the Governor hears these words, he fears the more, and asks:—"*Whence art Thou?*" And then he asks, "*What is truth?*" But there is no answer; for the Jews are instant in demanding sentence of death. At length, anxious for the favour of princes, and led astray from the path of justice by the impious wickedness of the Jews, the Governor yields to their iniquitous demand.

What a sad and wicked a thing it was that the words of execration, "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*" spoken of the Blessed Jesus, should have resounded through the streets of Jerusalem. Who of those who love Him would not have mourned and wept, had he heard those accursed crucifixion cries repeated against his most loving Lord Jesus. What, then, must the most tenderly-loving Virgin Mother have felt, when those dreadful shouts, those death-dealing words fell upon her ears; when that cruel doom, that tumultuous demand from the lips of all the people for the death of her Son upon the cross filled the air!

Weep with her, O faithful servant of Jesus, no matter of how little account thou mayest be, weep with her, and draw forth from the recesses of thy heart moans of sorrow and compassion. Try to think with what anguish the heart of the Mother of God must have been torn, when she heard her blessed Son claimed for the shameful death of the cross. He in Whose Ears ever resounds the Angelic Song, "*Holy! Holy!*" ringing

through the courts of Heaven, has now to hear the accursed tongues of Jews acclaiming Him with these words: "*Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!*" He Whom, but a short while since, on the Feast of Palms, the children had hailed with songs of praise, has now to hear—O awful change! —their parents madly demanding His crucifixion, and shouting: "*Not this man but Barabbas.*"

O thou to whom the Passion of thy Lord is dear, lay seriously to heart the thought of this hour, shut close the ears of thy heart against profitless chatter about things of this world, and throw them open wide to hear this miserable outcry for the crucifixion of Jesus. Be sure, O faithful soul, that it will profit thee more to meditate on it, than to know all about the wonders of the stars. If Jesus be indeed dear to thee, thou wilt not quit this theme without a bitter sigh.

When, therefore, the world is against thee; when it overwhelms thee with reproaches; be not overmuch disturbed by the spiteful words or threats of thy enemies, but call to mind the boundless patience of the Lord Jesus, and the accursed words, which He was content to hear for thy sake; and let idle talk pass thee unheeded. Should even thy good actions be distorted, and many set themselves up against thee, cavilling at thy words, bear all this meekly; for thou art not more innocent than Christ, Who was assailed with shouts of "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*" Be warned beforehand, and know that in the way, along which God would have thee walk, thou wilt have to endure much opposition; and that thou wilt not have praise of God, unless thou hast been exercised by many sufferings for His sake. For it was He Who said to the friends whom He loved: "*Blessed are*

ye when men shall hate you, and shall reproach you, for the Son of Man's sake." Follow, then, thy sinless Jesus, rejected indeed by evil men on earth, but chosen of God the Father, and crowned with glory and honour in Heaven. Let not evil words, which are things of a moment, get the better of thee, for whom is laid up by God an eternal weight of glory.

Now, therefore, O most gracious Lord Jesus Christ, I invoke Thy boundless charity, and pray Thee to kindle in my heart the flame of great sorrow for Thy Sufferings, to make it aglow with such a fervent love of Thee, that it may be joy to me calmly to endure evil-speaking, and accusations, of whatever sort they be. Grant that I may not fear the threats and annoyances of men, but may strive with all my might to imitate Thee in bearing the reproach of the Cross. Arm me against the inordinate desires of the flesh; and grant that, by fitting correction, I may crucify its evil lusts; may wash away my past faults by abundant tears of contrition, and may never deliberately yield to any further assaults of the evil one. Finally, I pray that in every spiritual conflict, and in every trial that may be laid upon me, Thou wouldest succour and defend me from the snares of the enemy, by holding above me Thy life-giving Cross. Set up though It was to put Thee to shame, may It be to me an ever-present help; that so I may render to Thee with faithful lips the sacrifice of thanks and praise for victory won under its shadow!

CHAPTER XIV

The stripping naked, the binding to the pillar, and the scourging of the Lord Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most kind Protector of all who hope in Thee, for the shame Thou didst endure in being stripped naked, in the sight of those who mocked Thee, when, by the cruel order of the wicked Governor, Thou wast ordered to be stripped by the Roman soldiers of Thy clothing, and to be hung upon the Cross quite naked, to be bound with hard cords, to be beaten with sharp-cutting rods, and to be scourged as if Thou hadst been a wicked seducer of the people, and the vilest of malefactors—all which was done to conciliate the wrath of the priests, who sought to glut themselves with Thy Blood, and to bring Thee down with sorrow to the grave.

I laud and magnify, and humbly praise Thee, especially for the fast binding to the stony pillar, which Thou didst endure, that so Thou mightest loose us from the bonds of our sins, and mightest restore to us that freedom which knows no end.

I praise and glorify Thee with thanksgivings which shall never cease, for Thy most cruel scourging; and for each of the hard stripes, and most sharply cutting wounds, inflicted on Thy most sacred and tender Body by those fierce soldiers who mercilessly struck Thy virgin Flesh, and rent it deeply, adding blow to blow, bruise upon bruise, that so there might remain no sound part in Thee, and that at each stroke numberless

streams of Thy Precious Blood might gush forth like those of a crimson river—all which Thou didst endure that Thou mightest purge us from the deep-rooted pollutions of our sins, and mightest cleanse our souls from every guilty stain by Thy own most Precious Blood.

Alas, alas, O Lord my God, how great was the fury of those most wicked Jews, what hearts of stone were those of the men who struck Thee, who shrank not from scourging Thee, the fairest of men, all sinless as Thou wert; but reared themselves like giants over Thee, and did their very worst against Thee!

O Thou Holy and Well-Beloved Son of my Lord, Thou Who art Innocence itself, what hadst Thou done to deserve such bitter pains? Nothing, nothing. Why then was all this? It is I—I a man lost and undone—who am the cause of all Thy misery and distress. Woe be to thee, thou mighty burden of my sins, to rid me of which it was needful that the Son of God should endure such torments!

Keep therefore ever in remembrance, O faithful soul, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, the Scourging of thy Lord; and, suffering so far as thou mayest with Him, give to Him in return the obedience of a heart filled with a lively sense of gratitude.

And thou, humble servant of God in religion, who livest under the strict rule of monastic life, fail not hither to turn the eye of thy mind in meditation. For if thou hast anything hard, anything contrary to the flesh, to endure; if only thou wilt meditate on the scourging of Jesus, it will be to thee light and easy to be borne. When, therefore, thou art reproved for thy faults, or art even

to be scourged for thy transgressions, call to mind at once the thought of the all-sinless Jesus stripped, for thy sake, of His clothes, and for thy sake grievously scourged; and willingly get thyself ready to receive discipline in memory of the Passion of thy Lord, and to expiate thy sins. Fall humbly upon thy knees, lay by thy scapular, take off thy habit, bow thy neck, offer thy whole body to the discipline which has been ordered thee, and between the strokes, as they fall upon thee, meditate devoutly thus: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my affliction is ever in my sight: wash me yet more, O Lord, from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: against Thee only have I sinned, and done evil in Thy sight: therefore have I justly deserved to receive discipline." It is better for thee now with good will to receive temporal punishment, than hereafter to be condemned to everlasting torments. For those who shrink now from being scourged as Jesus was, will, in the life which is to come, be shut out from the Kingdom of Christ, as children who are unworthy of it.

O altogether sweet Jesus, Who for me, the chief of sinners, wast most cruelly scourged, grant that I may gaze with a heart full of sorrow upon each wound made upon Thy sacred Body by the scourge, and that I may kiss it with heartfelt fervent love; and so may feel the savour of life, and the medicine of eternal salvation, flowing forth from thence upon me. Set me aflame with the fire of that boundless love, with which Thou didst prove that Thou lovedst me, when Thou didst vouchsafe most patiently to endure so many blows of the cruel scourge for me, Thy servant lying under condemnation. When tribulation of any kind comes upon me, grant, I pray Thee, to my

weakness the help of Thy grace; that so I may not be cast down under its burden, nor be too much distressed by it; but, remembering Thy undeserved scourging, may be found meek and submissive under what I have to bear, no matter how heavy it may be. Make me a partner in Thy sufferings, and stir me up to amendment of life by the chastening of sons, that so, by bearing punishment with due meekness and humility, I may in this life present become more pleasing to Thee, and in the life to come may rejoice with Thee more gloriously, in that Place, where all Thy Saints, no longer in fear of sin, rejoice for ever in the victory which Thy sufferings have won for them.

CHAPTER XV

Of the stripping, the mocking, the crowning, and the smiting of the Head, of the Lord Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, illustrious King of Saints, and shining Crown of everlasting glory, for the many unheard-of outrages and affronts, to which Thou wast once more subjected by Thy impious tormentors, when Thou hadst been brought by the cruel soldiers into the Praetorium. There, the whole band being gathered together unto Thee, Thou wast shamefully stripped of Thy own garments, and instead of them, wast mockingly clothed in a scarlet cloak; that so Thou mightest clothe us, who are devoid of all goodness, with the cloak of Thy own holiness, and mightest adorn us with the sweetness of Thy Own nature.

I praise and glorify Thee, with the special be-

votion of a heart full of compassion, for the very great pain Thou hadst to bear for us poor worms of earth, when the Crown of Thorns was forced upon Thy sacred Head. For at that time Thy ever-blessed Head, hallowed above those of all other Nazarites, was oppressed by such a multitude of thorns, and was so grievously pierced, even down to the brain itself, that large streams of blood ran down everywhere over Thy Neck and Ears, over Thy Eyes and Cheeks, and made Thy sweet Face, which was as yet scarce dry from the spitting of the Jews, bloody and disfigured.

O sight of all sights the saddest; to see the Son of God, in Whom no spot of sin could be found, so ignominiously and so cruelly crowned!

How surpassingly cruel was the rage of the soldiers, who shrank not from piercing with so many thorn-points that Head, so noble and so worshipful; and who even dared to insult the King of Angels by saluting Him in mockery, by smiting Him, and by making Him a gazing-stock to the multitude!

O most gentle Jesus, King deserving of all love, Crown of Confessors, Stay of the Church Militant, Joy of the Church Triumphant, Model for all who would follow Thee, how outrageously art Thou treated, how cruelly art Thou tormented; outwardly what affronts are heaped on Thee; inwardly with what unspeakable distress art Thou filled—and all for my sake; that Thou mightest save me from being confounded for ever, in the torments of Hell; that Thou mightest pluck out from my heart the thorns, which my sins have left in it; and that Thou mightest crown me, in the Heavenly Mansions, with a crown of glory and of honour that fadeth not away!

I laud and magnify Thee, for the mocking salutation, and pretended respect, shown to Thee; when Thy tormentors, bowing the knee before Thee, struck Thee on the Head; when they contemptuously adored Thee, and ironically styling Thee King, acclaimed Thee in the words: "*Hail, King of the Jews!*"

Behold, O man who must die, O servant of sin, to what anguish and contempt the Only Begotten Son of the Father is subjected for thy sake! Set open the ears of thy soul, and pour forth loving sighs and tears, as thou hearest Pilate's cruel words: "*Behold the Man!*" If thou hast any bowels of love, let all that is in thee burst forth in groans and tears of compassion for the Creator of the Universe.

I praise and bless Thee, my adorable Jesus, for the despiteful mockery which Thou didst endure, when, to add to Thy distress, a frail reed was put into Thy right Hand instead of a royal sceptre; as if to proclaim Thee an audacious pretender to kingly rank.

I laud and magnify Thee for the most cruel smitings of Thy already wounded Head, which Thou didst endure when those pitiless men and most brutal tormentors, lifting high the reed, struck Thee many blows with it on the top of Thy sacred Head; and, yet again covering Thee with loathsome spittle from their filthy mouths, thrust out their tongues at Thee.

Come forth, now, ye daughters of Jerusalem, and behold Solomon your King, wearing the crown with which His mother, the Synagogue of the Jews, crowned Him, on the day of His Passion.[1]

[1] [This passage was probably suggested by a sermon of St. Bernard, part of which is set down in the Roman

Behold how mighty is He Who goes out before you! See amid what outrages and insults He is, by Pilate's order, led forth; that so the pitiable condition, to which He has been brought, might be made known to all! In very sooth, to behold all this is misery, to think thereon is painful; with such affliction faithful love cannot but suffer in unison. See, from the Judgement Hall, goes forth the most meek and patient Jesus, wearing on His Head the Crown of Thorns, and clothed in a purple robe, that so perchance the rage of the fickle mob might be ever so little changed into compassion, at seeing their victim so dishonoured and ill-treated! But alas, alas, the angry crowd rages only the more fiercely; and, as the Governor calls out: "*Behold the Man,*" it shrieks back its answer: "*Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!*"

When thou hast heard all this, O faithful lover of Jesus, and laid it to heart, tremble, and grow pale, at the thought of the extremity of His affliction. Beat thy breast, pour forth thy tears, and fall low upon thy knees, at the sight of Jesus crowned, and made believe to be a King, maltreated all the while like the most contemptible of slaves—remembering that He bore all this terrible pain and distress that He might check in thee the longing for earthly renown, and subdue in thee the fatal disease of pride.

Be ashamed, O man, slime of the earth that thou art, of seeking earthly renown, when thou beholdest the most noble Head of Thy Lord treated with such contempt. As member of a Body, the Head of which is crowned with thorns, be not for

Breviary as Lesson IV., 2 Noct. of Friday after Ash Wednesday.]

very shame, fond of pleasure: having before thee thy Lord, in all His Majesty, submitting to this hardship and disgrace, shrink thou from choosing a life of greater softness; and aim rather at a passionate longing for a severer discipline than any thou hast yet had to undergo. Stand in awe, ye proud ones, who pant to rise higher in the world, who crane your necks that your heads may seem to overtop your neighbours', not thinking that the more ye put yourselves forward the more ye demean yourselves. Blush with shame, ye exquisites, who dare to carry yourselves proudly in the presence of Jesus scourged and crowned; take shame to yourselves ye who dress yourselves up in jewels and silk attire, ye who pile gold and silver ornaments upon your bodies, so soon to perish and decay; take shame to yourselves ye who tire your heads, and flaunt your grand apparel, and all the while are neglecting the work of your salvation, and are forgetting at the cost of what dire pains your redemption was purchased.

Be comforted, be comforted, poor Lazarus full of sores, and thou, whoever thou art, who in this world art of no account; for thou, in thy distress, and in thy low estate, art more in the likeness of Jesus of Nazareth than the rich man, as he goes his evil way, clothed in purple and fine linen.

And thou, cowled monk, take no shame to thyself for the meanness of thy habit, coarse, and covered with patches, though it be; for thou shalt have praise of God, and of His Angels, if it be thy outward apparel only which is mean and poor, and inwardly thou art adorned by a holy life! But take shame to thyself, thou monk, who oughtest to be dead to the world, and to rejoice in being poor, if thou wish for more dainty clothing

What true and refreshing consolation is in store for a Religious needing comfort in distress, when he does not fail often to meditate out of a sad heart, upon the most painful crowning of Jesus, His Lord! As often, then, as thou findest thyself ill at eaes, call to mind the many thorns with which the Head of Jesus was pierced, and thy pain will be made easier for thee to bear, whether it come from being vexed by others, or because thou hast a grievous headache, or (which is very often harder to bear) because the many-pointed stings of detraction are wounding thee. Better far, surely, is it for thee to suffer now with the suffering Jesus; and by bearing trials, of whatever kind they be, to wear thy crown of thorns with thy crowned Jesus; than hereafter, by reason of having followed thy own will and pleasure in thy life on earth, to have to suffer the pains of Hell, and to have to bear that worst of all the torments of the damned, the being cast out for ever from the presence full of joy of thy Saviour Jesus, and the being shut out for ever from the sweet company of the saints in Heaven. How joyously and fearlessly, at the dreadful Judgement Day, will that man stand before the King Eternal, who in this world does not shrink from bearing the reproach of His dishonour, and the anguish of His sufferings in the Flesh! How pleasing and how dear to God is that soul, and how fruitful is its meditation, which is inwardly bruised at the thought of the sufferings of Jesus, which is wounded to the heart by His Wounds, and at the thought of His death, expires with Him in a death of love.

I mourn over Thee, my loving Jesus, full ot patience and meekness, in Thy cruel scourging, in Thy shameful mocking, in Thy painful crown-

ing for my sake; and, that I may mourn the more deeply, I pray Thee to grant me the grace of a pity that may pierce me through and through. Humbly falling, therefore, at Thy Feet, I adore Thy glorious Majesty, subjected, in Thy Human Nature, to such insults and contempt; and, with lips vowed to Thy service, I earnestly beseech Thee to imprint plainly, and to stamp firmly, upon the tablet of my heart the image of Thy afflicted Face, as It was in that hour when Thou wast thrust forth as a leper abhorred of all men; and, crowned with thorns, wast made a gazing-stock for the raging multitude. May this most distressful vision of Thee so pass into the secret recesses of my heart; may it so powerfully afflict and pierce it, that every worldly longing may perish from my eyes; that every lust of the flesh may utterly die within me; and that, for Thy sake, everything that is humiliating and distasteful may seem to me sweet and pleasing. May the thought of Thy sufferings crush within me all my evil affections; and may the remembrance of Thy most cruel anguish make my daily worries easier for me to bear. May the holy vision of Thy crowning, borne in upon my mind, and carefully and deeply meditated upon, bring me great comfort under the assaults of the enemy, and help me firmly to resist temptation to impurity in thought. For a heart occupied with heavenly things, and truly contrite, has no room for evil imaginations, and is shielded from the flying darts of the enemy.

Strip me, too, O Lord Jesus, of the filthy rags, which are all that I have of my own. Clothe me with true righteousness, and grant me to bear contempt cheerfully; that so I may learn not to take offence if I am deprived of necessaries, nor

to lose my temper if old clothes are served out to me instead of new, or rough instead of soft. Keep me from being angry with those who flout me, and from paying back in their own coin those who find fault with me. Remembering Thy Crown of thorns, may I, for my own Salvation's sake, take calmly everything painful and distressing that comes upon me. Finally I pray that Thou wouldest pierce the hardness of my heart, and wouldest drive one of the sharpest thorns of Thy Crown right through its very centre; that so all the bad blood which is in my flesh may flow out through the wound which it makes, and the sharp goad of Thy holy love may remain fixed therein, till the thorns of my besetting sins, and the thistles of my temptations are thoroughly purged out of it, and I have become fit to be a seed-plot for virtues; and so the soil of my heart, poisoned as it is by the primeval curse, may again receive a blessing from the inpouring of Thy sacred Blood; and, in place of the thorn of envy, may bring forth the rose of charity, in place of the nettle of lust, the lily of chastity, in place of the burdock of vanity, the violet of humility, and in place of the bramble of harshness, the flower of gentleness.

CHAPTER XVI

Of the unjust condemnation of Jesus to death

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Author of life, and Model of justice, for Thy unjust condemnation to death, although guilty of no offence at all; whilst a man guilty of murder

and sedition, who had deserved sentence of death, was released. How perverse was such a judgement! How unjust was such an exchange! But when a mighty tumult was made of the people, and the judge saw that in no other way could he satisfy the ferocity of the Jews, he took his place upon the judgement seat, and pronounced against Thee the wicked sentence, that Barabbas the robber, who for a capital crime was worthy of death, should go scot-free; and that Thou, who wast altogether guiltless, shouldst be condemned to suffer that most shameful of deaths, the death of the Cross. Of what sort, alas, is the judgement of this world, and how shockingly is justice trodden under foot when the wicked begin to have dominion! Behold how *the just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart!* Alas, alas, He Who is Truth is delivered over to men who are false, the Holy One is scourged by sinners: He Who is guiltless is condemned instead of him who is guilty: a robber is chosen instead of Christ: and Barabbas, who had been cast into prison, is set free instead of Jesus of Nazareth! The lamb takes the place of the wolf; the Holy One that of the malefactor; the Best of men that of the worst; the man whose life was forfeit escapes, instead of Him Who is very God. Darkness is more highly esteemed than light, vice than virtue, death than life, clay than gold, a shell than a pearl, one who is infamous than One Who is most noble.

Which of us on hearing these things can withhold a sigh? Which of us can help burning with anger against the Jews? Which of us can help blaming the Judge? The Judge may wash his hands, he may excuse himself before men; we may grant that he acted in fear of Caesar, and that

he was overborne by the uproar of the Jews; yet is he not wholly free from guilt; for he knew that they had delivered Him up out of envy. Better, surely, would it have been to have sacrificed high place, and the honours of this world, than to have condemned One Who was innocent, and Whom the Governor knew to be such. More profitable had it been to have lost the whole world, than to have sinned against God, and to have put Christ to death!

How terrible, at the last day, will be the judgement of the ungodly and unbelieving, when God the Judge, Who is now condemned unjustly, shall have come in His glorious Majesty! Then shall all the godly and faithful rejoice, who now mourn over, and lament, the unjust condemnation of Jesus Christ, their Lord. Then shall they be joyous and free from care, who now patiently bear the hardships of this world, and submit to being wronged and despised.

O my sweet and loving Lord, Who wast unjustly condemned by Pilate the Governor, and sentenced to the shameful death of the Cross, grant that, whatever sentence may be passed against me in Chapter for my faults, I may humbly submit to it, and may never rashly judge my Superior, nor reply angrily to my accusers; but, after the example of Thy patience, may keep that silence which becomes me. Grant that I may not take unduly to heart being put upon by one who is above me, but may always leave my cause in Thy hands: for the servant is not greater than his Lord; and if Thou, Who art the Judge of all men, and wast absolutely guiltless, didst make no resistance to the violence of Thy adversaries, but didst submit to be unjustly condemned, how much more ought I to be ready to bear; and how cheerfully

ought I to submit to the judgement of my brethren, who have, in so many ways, and so often offended? Help me, O gracious Lord Jesus, willingly to bear the yoke of subjection, and the rod of correction, and in every trouble that comes upon me, to call to mind Thy anguish.

CHAPTER XVII

Of the bearing by Jesus of His Cross, and His being led forth to the place which was called Calvary

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, true Vine, Way of Life, and our Salvation, for bearing before all men Thy heavy and shameful Cross. For the Salvation of the whole human race, Thou didst vouchsafe humbly to take it up, and most patiently to bear it; that so, upon Thy own Shoulders, Thou mightest bring back, to Thy home in Heaven, the lost sheep so long sought after, and found with so much toil and trouble.

I laud and magnify Thee, illustrious Standard-bearer of the army of Christ, for Thy sorrowful and distressing journey, when, with the heavy wood of the cross roughly laid upon Thee, Thou wast ignominiously led forth outside the walls of that renowned city, in which Thou hadst so often manifested forth Thy glory by miracles worked, and holy doctrine taught therein. Now, however, amid the furious outcries of the whole people arrayed against Thee, Thou art treated as a comrade of thieves, and a chief of robbers, and art

going forth to be hanged, as one utterly vile and worthless, upon the highest cross of all, between two of the worst of malefactors.

I praise and glorify Thee, most gracious Jesus, for that cruel and most wearisome progress, for that journey amid such horrible surroundings, which Thou didst undertake for us. I praise and glorify Thee for each step Thou didst take; for the exceeding weariness and weakness of Thy Body caused by Thy previous sufferings; for the ascents and descents of the winding road, made more grievous to Thee by the burden of Thy Cross; for the haste with which Thou wast at one time urged forward from behind, and at another time dragged roughly on from in front, by the hard-hearted men of the guard in charge of Thee; hither and thither buffeted about by them. For Thou couldst only move with Thy Body bent almost double from the weight of that burden, so far beyond Thy strength, which Thou wast compelled to bear to the Hill of Calvary. Never before hadst Thou trodden so cruel a road; never before hadst Thou borne so grievous a yoke.

I laud and magnify Thee for the despiteful usage Thou hadst to endure from those brutish men who led Thee forth to execution, at one time abusing Thee, at another ill-treating Thee. I laud and magnify Thee for the many vile words which they used to Thee; for the many false slanders against Thy innocence which they hurled at Thee, as Thou wentest Thy weary way; for the insolent exultation of Thy enemies at the cruel death awaiting Thee, and for their savage joy at the hope of seeing Thee hang upon the shameful Cross—amidst all which horrors, heaped upon Thee from every side, Thou didst go as a meek lamb carried

forth for sacrifice, having before Thee our salvation as Thy aim; pitying the blindness of the Jews; and sorrowing over the malice of those who were leading Thee to the place of execution.

I praise and bless Thee for the loving hearts of Thy friends; for the abundant tears of compassion which they shed for Thee; and for the faithful companionship of the sad-hearted women, who step by step followed Thee on Thy way, with looks modestly downcast, most bitterly bewailing Thee. Turning to them, Thou didst restrain their mournful sobs with these gracious words: "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?*" O how bitter at that time was the grief of those who were dear to Thee, and how above all bitter was the lamentation of the holy women, who looked at Thee with eyes full of compassion, but were unable to come near to Thee, or to save Thee from going to Thy death.

And how inconceivably great must have been the woe which filled, and racked, the Mother's heart of Mary the Virgin, as she saw Thee, her only, her most dearly loved Son, bearing the Wood of the Cross, and going forth to die! O how willingly, had it been possible, would Thy blessed Mother, the most loving Virgin Mary, have endured for Thy sake the terrible shame of the Cross; and how gladly would she have offered herself to die instead of Thee, had she thought that this would have been pleasing to Thee. But that which was actually not possible, nor permitted, that mentally she did indeed bear to the full; for who, among the sons of men, could compassionate Thee so fully, could mourn for Thee so

keenly, could so truly bear Thy cross with Thee, as she, who loved Thee so fervently? No other heart of those who loved Thee could Thy anguish have so deeply pierced, as the loving heart of the one who was Thy Mother, the Virgin of surpassing love.

Nor may we doubt that Mary Magdalene, whose love for Thee burnt so brightly, and the bitterness of whose sorrow for Thee had made her scarcely able to stand, would, with a supreme effort of love, have willingly joined Thy Virgin Mother in laying hold upon Thy Cross, and would gladly have borne it with her in Thy stead.

The inward burden of Thy anguish was thus in many ways increased; for beside it, Thou didst also have to bear the things that came upon Thee from without, Thy being forsaken, namely, by Thy disciples, Thy Mother's grief, the stumbling-block which Thy tribulation was to many, and the faint-heartedness of those who despaired of Thy Resurrection: for, except that of the glorious Virgin, the faith of all was wavering, or seemed to be extinct.

O faithful disciple of Christ, make thou also haste to share the burden of the mystic Cross; and, if thou wouldst attain to joys eternal, strive now to follow thy Redeemer's steps. Shrink not from the slight hardship of a penance set thee, seek not to have the severity of discipline made less; but think that to be easy and light which the Rule of thy Order bids thee bear; fulfil with joy whatever holy obedience requires of thee. Should it seem to thee hard to obey its every precept, remember that for thy sake Christ became obedient to precepts harder still, even to the most shameful death of the Cross. Keep, then, the strict

Rule of the Fathers, quit not the path which leads to a throne. Shun that easier lot, by choosing which the slothful are so often brought to a bad end. On entering Religion, thou didst indeed take upon thy shoulders the Holy Cross, and, on being Professed, thou didst bind thyself to it still closer. To lead a holy and perfect life in Religion is to follow the Crucified. By observing the Rule of thy Order with all thy heart, thou bearest thy cross cheerfully. If thou bearest it unwillingly and grudgingly, not the Glory of Jesus, but the cross of the impenitent thief, will be thy reward; but if thou endurest all things willingly and joyfully, thou hast in great part won thy victory over the evil one. Fear not, therefore, the strictness of thy Order, nor count the days long that thou passest in it: the love of Christ and the sweetness of a good life will lighten the burden of thy hardships. There is One Who lived a life far harder, and Who set thee an absolutely perfect example, even Jesus the Son of God, the great Patron of the Cross, Who Himself made full proof of its weight. Follow, therefore, thy Saviour along the way of the Cross, by holding fast to thy life in Religion, and by never growing careless in the observance of thy vows, and thou shalt be safe for ever. For hadst thou wished to enjoy the good things of this life, or to follow thy own business or pleasures, thou mightest have remained in the world. As, however, thou hast chosen to follow Christ by entering Religion, hold fast to the Rule to which thou hast promised obedience. Pray Jesus to give thee His powerful help in doing this; for He Who at the outset gave thee grace to begin well, will doubtless perfect the good work which He began in thee.

O my dearly loved Jesus, Prince of the kings of the earth, Leader of the Angelic Host, illustrious Standard-bearer of all Christians, Who, for the salvation of Thy servants, and that Thou mightest set them a perfect example, didst bear upon Thine own shoulders Thy cross, amidst the jeers and scoffs of the Jews who surrounded Thee, grant me grace, slow of heart though I be, to follow Thee along Thy weary road; be with me to the end; and then lead, I pray Thee, my soul, now absent from its true home, from this body of sin to the Mount of Calvary, the hill of myrrh and frankincense, where Thou wast, for my sake, crucified and slain, that there I may rest under the shadow of Thy Cross, safe beneath its holy sign. Grant that I may now make a fresh start, and may follow Thee, not with the infirmity of purpose of those who are neither hot nor cold, but with renewed fervour of heart; keeping my eyes steadily fixed upon Thee, the Cross-bearer, and not letting them stray hither and thither like those who are inconstant in their ways. Be Thou my guide along the narrow road, and my companion as I follow it: be Thou at hand to help me when things are going well with me, to comfort me when they are going wrong, to sustain me in all the trials which I may have to undergo for the sake of Thy Holy Name. Help me to bear the burden and heat of the day, that I may be able to join my brethren in every Divine Office and holy observance. Grant me also, in my more serious troubles and anxieties, to call to mind Thy most cruel weariness under the burden of Thy Cross; for the paltry burden which is laid upon me will seem the merest trifle, if I think of the weight of the heavy Cross which Thou wast content to bear.

May I, then, trusting to the help of Thy grace, with a willing heart submit to, and even rejoice in, the burden of the life in Religion which I have taken upon me; for even if for a while, in order that I may win the merit of humility, Thou dost suffer me to feel it heavy, yet afterwards, at such time, and in such way, as Thou seest fit, Thou dost mercifully give me the grace of Thy ready help in bearing it. Teach me to conquer my own will, to be content with few things, and not to hanker after leave to walk abroad. May my hands be ever busy in the work which I have to do; may my heart be ever occupied in meditating upon Holy Writ; may all my limbs be employed in Thy service, all my senses kept under strict control; number me, I beseech Thee, poor and of no account though I be, among Thy true cross-bearers. Keep me from mixing with men of the world, and mortify in me all the desires of the flesh. May I never concern myself with the affairs of others, nor deal in idle gossip; but may I strive to keep my thoughts fixed upon the concerns of my own inner life, and to grieve in secret, with many a sigh and groan, over all the various things which I have done that I ought not to have done, and have left undone that I ought to have done. May I lay aside everything that would hinder my spiritual progress. May I run in the way of those who seek Thee, and have learnt to rise above things temporal by keeping their thoughts fixed upon the things that are above. May I ever keep carefully in mind Thy Cross, so lovingly borne for my sake; and while I burn with love of the Cross, may I at the same time commit all my ways into Thy hands, and resign my will to Thine: and so, patiently and submissively bearing the burden laid upon

me, until my appointed time shall come, may I at length reach the wished-for haven of safety and of peace.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the Crucifixion, naked, of the Lord Jesus; and of His hanging for many long hours aloft upon the Cross

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most gracious Fashioner of man, and Restorer of his fallen nature, for the shame of nakedness endured by Thee at the foot of the Cross, when before the eyes of the mob who, like beasts of prey howling for their food, were roaring at Thee. Thou wast stripped of Thy clothes, and put to open shame. After all Thy clothes had been roughly taken from Thee, and had been given away as prize, there didst Thou stand blushing, trembling, girt only about the loins with a thin linen cloth, and crowned, instead of a diadem, with a garland of thorns, set at nought of men and utterly despised and rejected: there didst Thou stand, absolutely stripped of this world's goods, as an outcast of the people and a poverty-stricken alien, nay rather as the very poorest of the poor, bereft of everything and of every human consolation. For as, in the Garden of Eden, before Paradise was lost, the first Adam went naked; so now Thou too dost, in like manner, ascend the Cross naked, to regain for us that lost Paradise, from which Adam was cast out, and driven forth. For it was in order that the innocence which had been lost might be restored to fallen man; and in order

that he might be clad in a robe of righteousness, and might be made an heir of everlasting life, that Thou didst submit to be deprived of Thy clothing, to be overwhelmed with anguish and distress, and in the end to pay the penalty of a most cruel death.

I praise and magnify Thee, Who wouldest all men to be saved, for the merciless way in which Thou wast stretched out upon the hard wood of the Cross, so roughly spread for Thee as Thy reclining-board; for the sharp piercing of Thy hands and feet, and for the driving into them of huge nails, the noise caused by which could be heard far off, and must have moved to tears even the hardest-hearted of the beholders. Thou wast, also, so firmly nailed to the Cross that Thy veins suddenly burst, and streams of Thy precious Blood poured forth from all parts of Thy Body. So ruthlessly indeed was Thy Body stretched out lengthwise and breadthwise, as if it had been the skin of a drum, that all Thy joints were loosened, and Thy bones could be distinctly counted. Thou didst allow Thy Hands and Thy Feet to be thus pierced by the ungodly, in order that by having Thy sacred Hands fastened to the Cross, Thou mightest discharge the debt incurred by Adam in stretching forth wicked hands to touch the forbidden tree; and, by shedding Thy innocent Blood, mightest wipe out the long-standing obligation of a sacrifice for sin.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy being lifted up on high upon the Cross, and for remaining hung so long upon the arms of that Tree of shame —the Tree which was at that time held by all Jews to be accursed, but is now held in supreme honour by all Christians, and blessed above every

tree that grows. On It, for our Salvation, didst Thou hang, for three full hours or more, working out those great and wonderful mysteries of the Cross, from which were to flow such inestimable benefits for all the world. Thou wast lifted up from the earth that Thou mightest draw up after Thee the loving hearts of those who believe in Thee, and prevent their leading a mere butterfly life in pursuit of earthly joys; that, by commiserating Thy sufferings, the tender hearts of Thy faithful ones might become yet more tender, and, at the sight of Thee upon Thy Cross, their love might burn still brighter; that in Thine Own Person Thou mightest triumph fully and openly over the powers of the air; that by thus humbling Thyself, Thou mightest make for transgressors intercession which could not fail of being heard, and mightest assure to the truly penitent full and free forgiveness of their sins; and that, by Thy death, Thou mightest reconcile the things which are in Heaven and the things which are in earth, and mightest make all things new.

Lift up thine eyes, then, O faithful servant of Jesus, and with sad heart, and mournful countenance, look upon thy Redeemer and thy God, hanging between the lofty arms of the Cross. Thy loved One hangs there naked, that thou mayest look on Him; His feet cannot move, but He waits for thee to come to Him, He longs for thee freely to draw near to Him. He lovingly opens wide His Arms, He shows thee His gaping wounds, He bends forward His Head to kiss thee, He is ready to receive thee into His favour, and without delay to forgive thee all thy sins. Draw near, then, boldly to the Cross, touch lovingly that which represents it, embrace it fervently,

hold it firmly, kiss it devoutly. Throw thyself at its feet, lie there, cling to the ground it hallows, go not from the Cross; that so at least one drop of the Blood which is trickling from it may fall on thee; or that thou mayest win to hear some word spoken by the Crucified, or, when the end comes, to stand by His side. May the same earth which received Jesus at His death, receive thee too; and where Jesus was buried, there mayest thou too find the place of thy rest, that as thou art one with Him in spirit, so also thou mayest be in the last resting-place of thy body.

Pay to Him the duty, which thou owest Him, of thy tears; enter into the secret chamber of thy heart; let the Crucified find in thee a loving and a sorrowing disciple, one who is thankful and devout, a cherisher of the inner life, and one who is drawn by the cords of love to His wounds; that so the whole world may be crucified to thee, and thou to the world; that so to thee to live may be Christ, and to die with Him thy greatest gain. Be it far from thee to glory, save in the Cross of Jesus Christ, thy Lord. Be it far from thee to trust in thy own merits; because upon the Cross of Jesus alone depend thy Salvation and thy Redemption, and on Him thou art most firmly bound to place thy only hope. Through Him it is that thy sins are forgiven, from Him it is that rich merits flow forth abundantly; with Him are the rewards of the righteous; and He will give to every man the just recompense of his deeds.

Strive therefore, after the example of the Crucified, to cast off the burden of things earthly, and to withdraw thy heart from all that may be hurtful to its inner life; to hold thyself aloof from the unrealities of thy passions and of worldly

cares; and to live thy life in the pure nakedness of truth; that so thou mayest be able, by despising thyself and all transitory things, purely and humbly to fashion thyself after the pattern of Him, Who hung naked upon the Cross; and so, by meekly bearing, because of thy burning love for thy suffering Redeemer, detraction and disgrace, thou shalt be made strong, and worthy of being raised upon a cross of thy own. Learn to rejoice in being despised and set at nought, to grieve more than thou art wont over the sins of others; and pray that all men may lead better lives. Deem thyself fit only for contempt, and yearn for the salvation of those who do thee wrong. Put small trust in men: few are faithful in time of need; and friends, who will stand by you, are seldom to be had. Wonder not at this; nor think it sad. Christ knew what it was to be forsaken by His friends, and to be surrounded by enemies: He Who went about doing good was repaid by base ingratitude. Put thy trust in the Crucified, thy Guide, and gracious Master; even in the time of trouble hold fast to Him, as He hangs upon the Cross, and thou shalt find grace, and be victorious over all thy enemies. But make ready a place for Him, and prepare, by humble and devout contrition of heart, a way for God's grace; that so thou mayest be able to draw sweet comfort from the wounds and sufferings of Jesus, and mayest taste how pleasant a thing it is to bear reproach, and to be treated as of no account, for the sake of His Holy Name. Choose a solitary life, so as to be able to get rid of causes of distraction; to find comfort in the Cross; to withstand sensuality; to guard against venial faults; not easily to fall a prey to idle vanities; to hold thy peace as to matters

which do not concern thee; carefully to cherish the good that is within thee. For it ill becomes one, who is devoted to the Passion, to give way to immoderate laughter; and to be wanting in gravity of behaviour is not consistent with a life in Religion. All these things are to be learnt from the Passion of the Crucified, and happy is the man who is daily exercised therein; for his spiritual progress will be sounder than that of his brethren, he will be fed with the fruit of the tree of life, and he will have joy therein for ever.

Look, O Heavenly Father, upon the Face of Thy Christ, as He hangs upon the Cross for me; and for the sake of the all-sufficient merits of Thy Only-Begotten Son, pierced with nails, and besprinkled with blood, be merciful to me a sinner, tied and bound with the chains of so many sins. For He was wounded to blot out my iniquities, He will make satisfaction to Thee for all my sins, He will answer to Thee in my stead. Him I offer to Thee as my Surety; Him I choose as my Advocate; Him I put forward as my Mediator; to Him I leave the defence of my cause. He will make good all in which I have fallen short; He, the blessed Fruit of the Virgin's Womb, will fully atone for all my transgressions of Thy commands. His pleading on my behalf, O most merciful Father, Thou wilt surely take pleasure in accepting; and thus, on account of His exceeding love, and great desire for my eternal salvation, I may always feel that hope and consolation, which in this life are profitable for me, and without which, in the life to come, I must needs be undone.

O good and tender Jesus, All-Holy Son of God, Who, in fulfilment of Thy Father's Will, didst vouchsafe to take upon Thee, without any spot of

sin, the substance of our flesh, and to offer the same upon the altar of the Cross for the salvation of the world, have mercy upon me, Thy servant, who pray to Thee for pardon and for grace. Of Thy goodness, and for the infinite merit's sake of Thy Passion, forgive, I beseech Thee, all my sins, whether new or old, whether committed against Thee knowingly, or unknowingly. Thy merits far outweigh the sins of all mankind; and the fullness of Thy atonement far exceeds my every sin, no matter how often committed. To Thee, therefore, do I flee for refuge, invoking the protection of Thy Cross, to which I trust for mercy greater than all my need; to Thee, from the bottom of my heart, do I cry, beseeching Thee to help me, and to save me. I venerate the sign of the Cross, I honour the banner of the Cross, I kiss the foot of the Cross, I invoke the aid of the Cross. Hearken to me in my distress; receive me, who flee to Thee for help; heal me, who come to Thee in contrition of heart; justify me a sinner. Till I am taken back into Thy favour, I will not leave Thee, nor let Thee go.

Root out of my heart, I pray Thee, O my Crucified Lord Jesus, all love for the things of this world. Take me by the arms, and raise me to the height of Thy Cross; let me follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. With Thee at hand, and keeping close to Thee, and so lifted up above all earthly things, gladly will I share Thy poverty and nakedness, passing my life in this world as an exile and unknown. Implant in my flesh the fear of Thee, lest I give way to sloth or laziness; transfix my feet, that so I may steadfastly persevere, and may bravely endure toil and sorrow. May Thy nails be driven through the centre of my heart, and rack me with a wholesome wound, that so I

may shed abundant tears of true contrition, and be as it were beside myself with the intensity of my love. Inspire me with sorrow, increase my devotion, till nothing is dearer to me, and nothing closer to my heart than Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified.

CHAPTER XIX

Of the Wounds of Jesus, and the shedding of His precious Blood

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Author of our Salvation, most gracious Giver of pardon, most patient in Thy long-suffering of man's wickedness, I bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee for all the pain, and for each several blow and bloody wound, so cruelly inflicted on Thy most precious and most tender Body; so that from the sole of the foot even to the top of the Head there was no soundness in Thee, but either a grievous wale, or an aching wound, or a stream of warm red Blood trickling down Thy whole Body.

I praise and glorify Thee with the worthiest adoration of which I am capable, and with all the powers of my soul laid at Thy Feet, for the generous outpouring of Thy precious Blood from Thy five sacred Wounds, and from all Thy other wounds, great and small, bleeding and sending forth a life-giving stream, more precious than any balm, to be an effectual remedy for all our sins. Ah! most gentle Jesus, how cruelly wast Thou tortured and wounded by savage men, so that all Thy bodily strength being exhausted, and Thy veins wide-opened, scarcely a drop of Blood remained in Thee; but whatever of that sacred

Stream, whether living or dying, Thou hadst in Thee, was all lovingly poured forth for our souls' use, and as the price of our Salvation.

O ye five precious Wounds, pre-eminent tokens of surpassing love, full of Divine sweetness, whence the sinner takes good heart, keeping thereby his guilty conscience from driving him to despair! In you is found the medicine of life, fullness of grace, plentiful forgiveness, boundless mercy, the gate which leads to the glory which is in store for us. Whatever pollution I incur, whatever sins of the flesh I commit, in your five fountains I may wash all away, and may be purified, and made faultless.

I praise and glorify Thee, O Christ, only and beloved Spouse of Holy Church, for that inestimable love, which moved Thee, to redeem my soul, by the covenant of Thy Own Blood, from the chains of Adam's sin, to cleanse it from all its sins, and to endow and adorn it with the merits of Thy Own holiness; that so, made holy by Thy grace, it might be found meet in this life to be joined and united to Thee, and hereafter to be made happy and glorious in the Kingdom of Thy excellent Majesty.

Mark carefully, O faithful soul, and see at what great and notable cost He redeemed Thee, Who, of His own unbought goodness, made thee, at the beginning, to His own image and likeness. For thou wast not redeemed from the guilt of original sin, nor from the many actual sins which, by the exercise of thy own free will, thou hast wickedly added thereto, with contemptible things, as gold or silver, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled. And not only upon the Cross, for thy cleansing, did He shed His Blood; but He also vouchsafed to leave

the same in the Chalice for thee to drink with faithful devotion in the Communion of that Sacrament, by which the daily sins of the world are purged and blotted out.

Alas! of what terrible punishment will he be thought worthy, who shall have accounted the Blood of the Covenant of the Son of God an unholy thing, and shall not have paid the debt of thanksgiving which he owes to the Wounds of the Crucified. Be careful, then, to render thanks to Him Who has so loved thee, to Him Who has wrought for thee this His inestimable benefit, by at least one short prayer, or one devout meditation, at some time, either of the day, or night. Many faithful soals, burning with love for Him, have rejoiced to shed their blood for Him: and yet more, taking part in His sufferings by using the rough ways of penance, have, for the Chalice of His Blood, humbly offered the waters of a bitter contrition.

Learn thou from their example to crucify thy flesh with its affections and lusts, manfully to resist temptation, and to bear until death the yoke of willing obedience; to offer to Christ thy Redeemer, upon the altar of thy heart, in place of a martyrdom of blood, the sacrifice of a troubled spirit. Seek by diligent meditation to keep ever before thee the benefits purchased for thee by the Cross, and to find in the deep wounds of Jesus, as in the clefts of a rock, a hiding-place from the face of the enemy and the avenger.

Come to my help, O most gentle Jesus, in my every need, in every crisis of the strife. Stretch forth over me Thy hands, and with Thy right arm ever protect me; put devotion in my heart, truth in my mouth, energy in my work. Purge me from

all the corruption of my sins, heal my wounds with Thy precious Blood. Let no hidden thing of darkness, nothing impure, nothing that defiles, remain in me; but may Thy sacred Blood, so abundantly shed, thoroughly cleanse me from all that is hurtful, and sanctify me wholly; that so, when, at the last day, Thou shalt come in Judgement, my spirit, and my soul, for the deliverance of which Thou didst endure so many and such grievous pains, and didst expend such boundless treasure, may be presented before Thee pure and undefiled.

CHAPTER XX

Of the tender pleading of Jesus for His enemies

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Fountain of love and sweetness, for Thy most perfect charity, and most devoted prayer on behalf of Thy enemies, and of those who were crucifying Thee. With Thy hands stretched out upon the cross Thou didst plead for them, imploring pardon for them, and making loving excuses for them, in the words: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*"—words so full of sweetness and of love that they might well have softened the heart of the most hardened of sinners, and have led him to repent. O most sweet Jesus, how ready art Thou to forgive, how easily art Thou appeased, how plenteous art Thou in mercy! How vast, O my Lord, must be the stores of Thy tender mercies towards those who love Thee, when Thou couldst show forth such loving kindness towards Thy savage enemies; when, raised aloft upon Thy cross, Thou wast not moved

to anger against Thy crucifiers, and didst not seek to be revenged upon Thy tormentors, didst not pray that the earth might swallow up alive those wicked men, or that fire from heaven might consume them in a moment; but didst shed forth upon Thy cruel enemies, like healing dew from Heaven, the words: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" In this was manifested Thy most excellent charity and Thy unspeakable tenderness, which nothing could overcome, nothing could hold back from loving intercession. They were crying out: "*Crucify Him, crucify Him!*" and Thou sayest: "*Father, forgive them.*" They pierced Thee with hard nails, and Thou makest excuses for their foul iniquities, in the words: "*For they know not what they do.*" O Christ, how wondrous is Thy love!

But alas for the obstinacy of the stiff-necked people, whose hearts were not touched by words so full of love. Thou didst feel more anguish on account of the blindness of their malice, than on account of the wrong which was being done to Thee: and the working of so great wickedness caused Thee more pain than the torture of all the wounds which had been inflicted on Thee. They did Thee all the harm they could; and Thou didst repay them by doing for them Thy best. The best and most loving thing Thou couldst do for men so wicked, was to pray that they might be turned from their evil ways, and might confess that Thou, the Son of God, hadst truly come in the flesh. And thus were fulfilled those memorable words of Isaias, which of old he had spoken concerning Thee: "*And He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors,*" that they may not perish.

When to those who crucified the Pardon-Giver so great loving-kindness was shown, who can despair of the forgiveness of his sins? Cease, then, O my soul, to despair, self-accused though thou be of so many sins. Entangled as thou art in the snares of so many evil lusts, assailed as thou art by so many temptations, thou hast still, unhappy one, the hope of life: bowels of mercies yearn for thee—of this the Cross, the Nails, the Lance, all the blood-stained Wounds of Jesus are witnesses. Hide thyself, O my soul, hide thyself within the deep Wounds of the Crucified, kiss the wales of His Stripes, clasp with loving arms the Tree of life, hold fast to that most sure pledge of thy Salvation, Jesus hanging on the Cross. Devoutly adore Him, commit thyself to Him in full assurance of faith, put thyself wholly into His hands; for He, Who so abounded in love to those who hated Him, will surely be yet more gracious to thee, when thou art sorrowing for thy sins.

But if thou wouldst be heard speedily, if thou wouldst find grace at the hands of thy Redeemer, and wouldst obtain mercy from Him in all its fullness, thou too must, from the bottom of thy heart, forgive thy brother his trespasses against thee. Forgive him the few small matters in which he has offended thee, that God may forgive thee thy many sins against Him; and pray for his salvation as much as for thy own: so doing, thou shalt find grace; and, by imitating the example of Jesus, Who bade us love our enemies, and pray for them that persecute us, thou shalt become a child of the Most High. If, when suffering unjustly, thou wilt school thyself to forgive the wrong done thee, and wilt lovingly pray for those who have trespassed against thee, thou shalt lay up for thyself,

against the hour of thy death, a store of sure and certain hope. It was this holy prayer which won for the apostles the blessedness of Heaven, which gave to martyrs their crown, which made Confessors renowned, which adorned Virgins, and made all the Saints Christ-like and meet for everlasting life.

O most gracious Lord Jesus, Who of Thy infinite love didst vouchsafe to pray for Thy enemies, vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, in the same spirit of charity, to pray the Father for me, that He will grant me full pardon for all my sins, and will of His great mercy deliver me from the punishments which they have deserved. Grant that I may have a perfect and unwavering trust in Thy love and mercy, and that I may not give way to despair on account of the greatness of my sins; but may remember, in the full assurance of faith, that Thou camest into the world to save sinners, and didst will to suffer, to be crucified, and to die, for the ungodly. May, then, that prayer for Thy enemies, which, in fulfilment of this Thy blessed purpose, Thou didst pray upon Thy Cross, bear fruit to the salvation of my soul; and grant to me, I pray Thee, a sure hope of obtaining pardon through it; that so I may be found meet to obtain, through Thy most holy intercession, that which by my own merits I could never hope to win. Grant me boldly and fearlessly to seek refuge under the shadow of Thy wings, and to be kept by the invincible sign of Thy Holy Cross from all fear of the old enemy. As I haste to lay hold upon Thy Cross, spread over me, I beseech Thee, the shelter of Thine arms; that so, whenever my last hour shall come, my helpless and sorrowing soul may neither be afraid nor despair; and take, I pray Thee, to Thyself, me, a miserable sinner, trusting

not at all to my own works, but solely to Thy great mercy.

CHAPTER XXI

Of the plundering, and the sharing, of the garments of Christ

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, and Giver of all good things, for the rude plundering and the mocking partition of Thy garments; when, as soon as Thou hadst been cruelly nailed to Thy Cross, Thou wast savagely despoiled of all Thy clothing, and wast driven forth disinherited even to the last farthing; so that there was not left Thee even a stitch of clothing wherewith to cover Thy nakedness, nor even a piece of linen for a shroud, in which after Thy death Thou mightest be wrapped, and be decently laid in Thy grave. If Thou art not to go to Thy grave naked, a winding-sheet will have to be obtained for Thee from strangers, and will have to be given as an act of kindness to one utterly poor and destitute. How hungry was the covetousness of those soldiers—soldiers indeed, nay rather low vagabonds! How shameless was the rapacity of those base men of the guard set over Him, who in their unholy greed were not ashamed of despoiling Jesus of His scraps of worldly goods; but sated, as best they might, their thirst for gain by making the meagre garments of the Crucified their prey! Having taken His garments, they made of them four parts, to every soldier a part, leaving entire the coat only, because it had no seam; and for it they cast lots,

because they could not share it otherwise without wasting it. Alas for the wickedness of those robbers! Alas for the spite of those extortioners, who had not even so much pity for Jesus hanging on the Cross, poor and naked, as to give Him back some little thing, or to leave even a shred of one of His garments for His sorrowing Mother to keep as a remembrance of Him Whom she had lost! Not one of these things did they, because, urged on by the Devil, they were working out their sacrilege, without thought of a judgement to come.

O my most dearly loved Jesus, neither by word, nor by deed, dost Thou offer any opposition to all this: Thou dost endure it all in silence; and surely, in thus bearing the loss of all that belonged to Thee, Thou makest it plain to me what I ought to do when anything which I think needful for me is taken from me; for it is Thy Will that I should show myself more ready to bear the loss of worldly goods, than to claim things which belong to me of right. Thy garments were not, as I suppose, elegantly made, nor of brightly coloured stuffs, but rather plain and simple, such as poor folk would wear; or were, may be, made after the fashion of the clothing of the Nazarites or of the prophets of old; doubtless they were not the dainty work of a cunning tailor, but rather were woven and put together by the hands and the needle of the Holy Virgin, with skill inspired by the Holy Ghost; or were, may be, bought, during His childhood, for the use of her Son, by the Virgin Mother, with money earned by her by work done for her neighbours. To think of the Supreme Creator of Heaven, true God, and true Man, reduced to such straits as this! At His birth he had scarcely a few poor rags to cover Him, and now at His death, He has

no clothes at all! Then a narrow manger held His infant limbs; now deprived of all His worldly goods, He has, in all the world which He created, no place to lay His Head except His Cross; for as He came into the world poor and needy, so now He willed to leave it naked and an outcast. At His birth He was tightly wrapped in swaddling-clothes; at His death He is pierced by lance and nails. The thought of so great misery calls surely for compassion; the showing forth of so great patience calls surely for imitation. Be thou, then, more patient than ever before, when things that seem needful to thee are taken from thee, or when things upon which thou hast set thy heart are denied thee. Learn to do with little, and to be content with what is mean and poor; so shalt thou be kept from grumbling, and shalt have peace in thyself, and favour with Almighty God.

O that I could possess, or could devoutly touch or kiss, even one small piece of those sacred garments of Jesus, my Lord, from whence so often went out such great virtue that the sick were healed thereby! How holy are the relics of those garments, and in what veneration should they be held, wherever they are to be found! Truly, if those soldiers had but known their worth, they would never, in their greed, have cut them up, or sold them for some mere trifle; but rather would most carefully, and with due reverence, have preserved them in caskets of silver; for they were indeed more precious than all the royal mantles of kings, and all the robes of bishops, nor has any metal been found so precious as to deserve to be compared with them. But their sanctity and high distinction were hidden from those ungodly men, whose anxiety to satisfy their greedy thirst for gain,

made them unable to perceive the fragrance of their holiness. Alas! How sad it is to think that so noble a jewel should have been broken up, and rent asunder by men who cast lots for it. It seems to me that if some rich and powerful follower of Christ had been there at the time, he would willingly, for the redeeming of those holy relics, have offered a great sum of money; or would at any rate have secured some part of them; and having thus acquired a treasure of untold value, would have gone home rejoicing.

And now, O most sweet Jesus, patient endurer of so many wrongs, grant that, to the increase of Thy praise and glory, I may be able, by pious meditation, in some measure to undo the tangle which those soldiers, by way of causing Thee distress, set themselves to weave. Blessed be the holy and spotless garment, with which Thy virginal Body, born of Mary the Virgin, was for many years becomingly clothed. Blessed be the hem of Thy garment, on touching which all who had need of healing, and came to Thee in devout faith, were, as we read, at once made whole. Blessed be Thy coat, woven without seam, that should never have been used by man, but should have been kept for God's holy service only.

For it ought to have been kept intact, not only on account of the special reverence due to it, but also as a symbol of the unity of Holy Mother Church throughout the world. She indeed, although divided by countries, nations, and languages, and although she has within her fold men of different ranks and stations of life, yet lives, and is governed and sustained under one head, and one chief pastor, as one whole body of the Church, keeping one faith, acknowledging one baptism,

believing in God, One in Undivided Trinity; having one Spouse, Jesus Christ, reigning in Heaven, from Whose Side no temptations of whatever kind can separate her: for Thou, O Lord, hast indeed given to Thy Bride, the Catholic Church, an impregnable shield against all error—the word of truth, the light of knowledge, and the fervour of charity—that so she may obtain the crown of everlasting life which fadeth not away.

O Jesus, King of kings, at once the richest and the poorest of men, O Lord most poor, as stripped of Thy clothes, and deserted by Thy friends; but at the same time most rich in the fullness of Thy spiritual gifts; grant, I beseech Thee, to me, Thy poor servant, out of the abundance of Thy excellences, to have one at least in its fullness, that, namely, of not being found naked and ashamed before Thee, like the man who was found at the marriage supper not having on a wedding garment, and was presently, for this defect, cast out from the company of the Saints. May my heart be torn to pieces by a wholesome sorrow for sin, in remembrance of the tearing of Thy garment into four parts, so that by one at least out of four motives I may be moved to repentance; by fear of Hell, by hope of future glory, by sorrow for past sin, or by thankful love for grace given me. Give me also that of which Thy seamless coat is the symbol—the unity, namely, of brotherly love in the bond of peace, that so I may get rid of everything which may lead to dissension; may shun the hubbub of the world; may, for love of inward peace, abstain from foolish talk and speculation; may rejoice to lead a poor and hidden life with Thee; and may have no hankering after this world's pleasures. May I not be anxious to have

anything of my own; since Thou, when on earth, hadst no worldly goods, and the little that Thou thoughtest fit to use for Thy actual need, that even Thou didst allow robbers to take from Thee, and to waste; thus setting to all those who are suffering wrong, an example of patience, that so they may not regret overmuch the loss of what belongs to them.

CHAPTER XXII

Of the revilings of the Jews, and the strong perseverance of Jesus on the Cross

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Who art the Glory and the Crown of Rejoicing of the Citizens of Heaven, for all the reproaches and blasphemies hurled at Thee by the perfidious Jews, as Thou hangedst on Thy Cross. From the least of them to the greatest they took part against Thee, and came running together like mad dogs to devour Thy innocency. Like dogs they barked at Thee with their mouths, like lions they gnashed upon Thee with their teeth, like snakes they hissed at Thee with their tongues. With their lips they cursed Thee, with their faces they mocked Thee; they clapped with their hands, they danced with their feet, they rejoiced in their hearts; because they had before them, hanging on the Cross, Thee, Whom they would not willingly let die without being harassed and insulted. Those, therefore, who passed by shook their heads, like frantic and drunken men, full of the gall of bitterness and the poison of ill-will, crying out: "*Wah! There is the man that destroys the temple of God, and in three days builds it up again!*"

Moreover the Chief Priests with the Elders and the Scribes, who were by way of being the rulers of the people, and ought to have restrained their malice, were worse than the others in deriding Thee; for, with glaring eyes, and stretched out necks, they stood over against the Cross, casting up at Thee impudent glances; and, jesting one with another, poured forth their shameful blasphemies, saying: "*He saved others; Himself He cannot save.*" Thus did they strive to misrepresent and to disparage the wonders which Thou hadst divinely wrought, and the gifts of healing, which Thou hadst so mercifully dispensed, but of which they were known to be envious. They suggest therefore that Thou shouldst come down from the Cross, falsely pretending that they, who had so often shown themselves the enemies of true believers, would then believe in Thee. When Thou didst work yet greater miracles than this, they piled up false accusations against Thee, instead of believing in them: clearly, therefore, what they now wanted was, not to believe, nor to seek for Salvation, but to provoke Thee by their malice. And so, at length, brimming over with presumptuous insolence, they flung at Thy Divine Nature impious words; and, addressing Thee as the Son of God, they said: "*He trusted in God: let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him: for He said. I am the Son of God.*"

O most cruel and most savage persecutors of the Son of God, why were ye not content with perpetrating the horrible crime of the Crucifixion? Why must ye add to your sins that of blaspheming and deriding the Son of God? Alas! Alas! what do ye? Why sharpen your venomous tongues upon One so loving and so spotless? Wherein has

He sinned; or in what has Christ at any time done you harm? Has He not done all things well, Who hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak? Has He not made your whole land famous by many excellent miracles, and by His doctrine full of sweetness and grace? Did He not pray even for His enemies? What evil recompense did He deserve for all these things? Why do ye return evil for good, and hatred for love? Fitter were it that, by way of expiating so great wickedness, ye should have shed tears, than that ye should laugh in the face of the Crucified. But alas, ye know not, neither do ye care. In stubborn hearts there is found no place for compassion, nor for contrition, nor for thought of benefits received; nay rather a devilish madness, breaking out in yet more bitter taunts and insults, ever urges such men on to more atrocious crimes. Being no longer able to wreak their vengeance by means of swords and clubs, they set to work to use the even sharper weapons of their tongues.

And now, in the same way, the soldiers, to whom was committed the execution of the cruel sentence, proud of the work assigned them, knowing nothing of the Law of God, and made worse by the attentions and the encouragement of the Rulers of the people, go nearer to the Cross, and in mockery offer vinegar to the Crucified, saying: "*If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself!*" Ye stupid soldiers, base in your manners and in your deeds, who has taught you so to fight that ye should war against God? It is not the work of gallant men to persecute One Who is holy, One Who is poor; to leave naked One Who has been robbed, to tear His garments in pieces, to mock the Crucified, to offer vinegar (which no man likes to drink) to

God Who is about to die. Nevertheless ye cannot harm Christ: for wisdom overcomes malice, and the patience of Jesus no insults can exhaust.

The thief, too, who hung on the left hand, and remained impenitent in his sin, joined in these reproaches, saying: *"If Thou be Christ, save Thyself, and us."* That unhappy man, alas, treats Thee with contempt, and plunges into an abyss of horrors. Instead of praying, as he should, for forgiveness of his evil deeds, he insulted Thee, the Bestower of pardon. And so, the wretched man met his death in despair, and perished miserably.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy unflinching steadfastness in clinging to the Cross to which Thou hadst submitted Thyself, and from which no revilings, no specious suggestions, could move Thee to descend—not even for one short moment wouldst Thou leave that Cross upon which, of Thy Own free will, Thou hadst been raised on high It was Thy will there to abide to the end, where of Thy exceeding love Thou hadst placed Thyself; there to remain and to die, and there to consummate, in a way fitted to accomplish Thy purpose, the work which for our sakes Thou hadst begun. Thou Who didst teach men to persevere in every good work, didst Thyself upon the Cross first make profession of obedience, and didst affirm Thy precept by leaving to Thy followers Thy own example.

Come near now to the Tree of the Crucified, thou who art a despiser of the world, a lover of the Holy Cross, and professed in Religion. Play the man, and hold fast to the holy purpose thou hast laid down for thyself. To hold fast thy rule, to live under obedience, and to persevere in discipline is work for Christ, and the perfecting of

thy salvation. Therefore let no one prevail on thee to give up life in religion (the way of perfection), to cease to love the religious life, to be false to the vow made at thy Profession. Remember always the Apostle's words: "*Christ became for us obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross.*" Whatever therefore the world may promise, however the flesh may allure thee, however sorely the devil may tempt thee, however much thy friends may seek to dissuade thee, however much men of the world may laugh at thee, turn not thou aside, take no heed, throw scorn upon it all. Stand fast in Christ, look upwards, raise thy eyes to the Crucified, Who invites thee with outstretched arms, and promises thee in return for thy brief toil an everlasting reward. "If," He says, "thou wilt suffer with Me, thou shalt reign with Me; and if thou wilt die with Me, with Me shalt thou be glorified."

O Jesus Christ, most brave and most powerful Champion, most fervent Lover, and Consecrator of the Holy Cross, grant, I pray Thee, that I, who have taken upon me life in Religion, may ever serve Thee with cheerful steadfastness, and may never allow the irksomeness of duties assigned to me to quench the fervour of my loving zeal; but may always press onwards to the things that are before, and may bravely resist the temptations of the flesh, and the assaults of the enemy of my soul. Grant that I may ever be patient in adversity, and may not fear the taunts of men, nor seek to win their praise; that I may turn away my eyes from the things of this life, and may look for all my comfort to Thee, my only Saviour. Grant that I may never shun the embrace of the Blessed Cross on account of any man's favour or

displeasure; but under its protection, and with it for my banner and device, may bring to a happy end a life of willing obedience.

CHAPTER XXIII

Of the Word spoken on the Cross to the thief

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, chief and only Comfort of sinners, for the boundless love and exceeding mercy, which Thou didst vouchsafe to show to him who hung at Thy right hand upon his cross. He had been a most wicked thief, but was now at length converted, and a true penitent. As soon as he acknowledged his sinfulness, and was truly sorry for his evil deeds, he obtained, by Thy sure promise, remission of all his sins, and entrance into Paradise; for when a man's contrition is true, and his conversion complete, his repentance, however late it may be, will not fail of its reward.

How blessed and life-giving are the conversion and contrition of sinners, by which, without delay, a man may win a place in the Kingdom of Heaven! That penitent, who had been a thief, but was now a blessed Confessor, although he had long and grievously sinned, yet at last, and in the hour of his greatest need, came to himself; and grieving with heartfelt sorrow for all that he had done, humbly sought forgiveness, and obtained full pardon. For when he owned that he was justly condemned to death, he admitted that he had been guilty. He had a zeal for righteousness, when he reproved his comrade at his side for the wickedness of his blasphemy. He shows that his heart

is in its right place, when he laments that Christ, Who is altogether free from guilt, has been unjustly condemned. He had great faith; for he did not despair of obtaining mercy from Christ; but asked to be remembered by Him in the Kingdom of God: and so, being full of the gifts of grace, he appealed, in the full assurance of faith, to Thee, O Lord Jesus, Whom he owned as the loving Shepherd of souls, the true Priest, and the Confessor of all confessors the most faithful; and having in his mind's eye the whole course of his life, he said: "*Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom.*" And Thou, O most gracious Jesus, didst answer him in those most sweet and most comforting words: "*Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.*"

O words sweet indeed, and altogether lovely, laden with encouragement from the Mouth of God, bringing joy to the heart of the contrite sinner in his agony, and overflowing with comfort for one who was in such anxiety and distress. With what a sense of safety can he now die, to whom it has been given to hear such a promise! He shall have no fear in the evil day, whom the Lord Jesus has promised to uphold. To this thief, confessing the Lord Jesus, is granted that which was refused to Peter, entreating Him. Peter wished to set up tabernacles on the Mount of the Transfiguration, but his request was not granted; and when the hour of the Passion was at hand, and Peter wished to be with the Lord through it all, he was told: "*Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter.*" To the Apostleship Peter was the first to be called; but in entering the Kingdom the thief went before him. How marvellous, O Lord, are Thy works! Thy thoughts

are exceeding deep. How unfathomable are Thy judgements, and how past finding out are Thy words! An unwise man will not well consider, and a fool will not understand these things. How blessed was the opportunity of this robber, who was permitted to suffer with Thee, to die with Thee, and with Thee to enter Thy Kingdom. I know not what good he had before this done in all his life; but of this I am sure, that when its end came he got rid of all his evil deeds by his humble confession. How boundless, then, was the mercy by which one so steeped in guilt had no sooner made to Thee his humble prayer: "*Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom,*" than all was forgiven him! Thou, O Lord, merciful and gracious, gavest ear at once to the penitent, and didst comfort the soul of him who had confessed his sin with the gracious answer: "*Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.*"

How comforting and wholesome a thing is it for me thoughtfully to consider the circumstances of this thief's death, and of Thy most sweet answer to his prayer; not in order that I may be more fearless in sinning, or may put off amendment longer than I should; but that, from the fact of a man, who had been such an evil-doer, being so suddenly converted, being made an heir, by Thy merciful grace, of everlasting life, and restored to Paradise, I may learn, when suddenly overcome by temptation, that I need not despair. I should indeed, O Lord, be sorely troubled on account of my many sins, did I not know of Thy mercies, had I not heard of cases of penitents most graciously taken back into Thy favour. It is Thou Who by the mouth of Thy Prophet didst say: "*I would*

not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live": and again by Thy own mouth: "*God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting*": and again: "*I am not come to call the just, but sinners.*" It was Thou Who without delay didst forgive to Mary Magdalene all her sins, as she knelt weeping at Thy Feet. It was Thou Who didst take back into Thy favour Peter, who had thrice denied Thee, when he went out and wept bitterly. It was Thou Who, in Thy mercy, didst heal those who were taken with divers diseases, and, in the abundance of Thy love, didst loose those who were bound with the chain of very grievous sins—witness the woman taken in adultery, whom Thou didst save from the hands of her accusers, who were about to stone her.

O most gracious Jesus, my hope of mercy, and my refuge; Thou Who undertakest for me, and deliverest me from my cruel enemies; be merciful to me, and suffer not my soul to perish, to redeem which Thou wast content to endure the shameful death of the Cross. Remember Thy sacred words spoken to the thief, by which to me also Thou hast left a hope so firm that it can never be shaken. Say, then, to my soul, O Saviour of my life, when the hour of my departure shall draw nigh: "*This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*" What more joyful words could a dying man hear, in what sweeter sounds could his senses be steeped, than those of that answer of good comfort: "*This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*"? Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom; forsake me not in the awful hour of death, when my strength is failing, when my voice is a mere

whisper, when my sight is almost gone, when my ears are almost deaf. Then, O my good Jesus, haste Thee to help me, and send Thy holy angels to comfort me in my agony, that the cruel enemy, who lies in wait for us at our last hour, may not prevail against me. He even dared to look for some weak point in Thee, that might be open to his attack; but finding none, he was utterly confounded, and departed from Thee. So let them be confounded that seek after my soul to destroy it, let them be turned backward and be put to shame suddenly. But let my soul be joyful in Thee, and rejoice in Thy Salvation, O Lord, meditating on Thy gracious second Word from the Cross: "*Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*" May those words, made sweeter by the thought that Thou didst speak them from Thy Cross, be often on my lips, and more often still in my heart. Words coming from the lips of my Lord as He hung upon the Cross, have a more grateful sweetness, and a fuller power, than any others, and call therefore for more thoughtful attention, more anxious meditation. Oh that I may have grace so to live; Oh that I may strive so to serve my Lord, that when the hour of my departure from the body shall come, I may be found worthy to hear that most sweet word spoken from on high: "*This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*"! And Oh that Thou wouldst also speak to Thy poor servant those other most joyful words: "*Well done, thou good servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*" For at that hour nothing can profit more, nothing bring more joy, than to have led a good life, and to have served Thee faithfully until death.

CHAPTER XXIV

Of the illustrious title of the Name of JESUS *set up above His Head upon the Cross*

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Almighty Power, and King of every creature, for the illustrious title of Thy Holy and Blessed Name, openly displayed above Thy Head. It was carefully written, by Pilate the Governor, in the three most renowned languages of the world, in letters of Hebrew and Greek and Latin, in this form, and in these words: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

O title in very truth illustrious, not the creature of man's ingenuity, but rather of Divine ordinance, foreseen, and dictated by God, from all eternity. Pilate, indeed, could not, and ought not, to have written otherwise than as he was inspired by Thee to write; and so it is that the mystic sense of this title is found in the famous scriptures of the prophets expressed in their own words. What, therefore, the sacred page had long before predicted, what clear tradition had handed down along the ages, in praise of Thy life-giving Name, that the heathen Governor, inspired by God, wrote upon a small tablet, as an everlasting memorial of the Crucified, in these words: "*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.*" When, therefore, many of the Jews had read this title, the priests, in the fury of their ill-will, could not bear that the glory of Thy Name, which they had been struggling with all their might to obscure, and—which was yet more senseless—to wipe out at the same time as

Thy life, should be thus proclaimed to the world: and so they came to Pilate the Governor with their complaints as to the honour needlessly conferred by such a title, saying: "*Write not, the King of the Jews; but that He said: I am the King of the Jews.*" For they feared that they would be confounded, and that their wicked cruelty in having crucified their King would be laid to their charge; and to prevent this being any longer spread abroad, they asked to have the title changed, so that Jesus might not appear to have been crucified on account of their malice; but that He might rather seem to have been condemned as a pretender to a throne, and because He Who had never in this world exercised any royal authority, had dared to say that He was a King.

O ye Jews, most impious of men, the fact is not as ye would make it out to be; but it is ye yourselves who are guilty of all this, it is ye who are the ringleaders in the killing of the Son of God. Ye are without excuse, try with all the artful cunning that ye may to cover up your grievous crime; for, before Pilate, ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you: and now ye have come to this, that ye would fain get rid of the truth of this title, and make yourselves out to be guiltless. But Pilate, who, in condemning the Lord to death, was much less guilty than yourselves, and in writing the title was more truthful, in his answer to your envious appeal showed himself to be also more consistent; for he said: "*What I have written, I have written.*" It was as if he had said: "Read it, or not, as you please, but do not think to turn me from my purpose: what I have written I have written: I did not take your advice as to the title

I should write; nor will I change what I have written because you wish it: it will remain as I have set it out: God inspired it, not man: I affirm it, therefore, and maintain its truth: nor will I be prevailed upon by any one to alter it: to all people and languages I declare His dignity and order Him to be proclaimed, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*" O brave Governor, thy inscription was very good, and thy answer to those priests was just. I praise thee for having framed so holy and beautiful a title for the Cross of Jesus of Nazareth, and for having so boldly put the Jews to silence: but in this I praise thee not, that thou didst consent to the death of Christ—in so doing thou didst grievously sin.

And be thou also careful, O faithful disciple of Jesus, discreetly to think over the words of this sacred title, to read them thoughtfully, and to utter them reverently; for to read this title, "*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,*" is a very strong protection against fear of the enemy. Make the sign of the Holy Cross, sign thyself with it on thy forehead and on thy breast, and then read devoutly the words of this title; and in place of anxiety and distress, thou shalt perceive in thyself such help as will leave its mark on thee: for if thou invoke the saving Name of Jesus by using the words, "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,*" the power of Christ, and a sure trust in God, will not suffer thee to be exposed to danger. The full sweetness of this most illustrious title no words can express, no mind can adequately grasp. The words are but four [1] in number; and yet do they invite the whole world to give honour to the Holy Name. All ye princes of the world, there-

[1] [*Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judaeorum.*]

fore, all ye nations and people, give ear to them, read them and say: "Hail, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*, Who didst suffer for the Salvation of all men."

O Jesus of Nazareth, bright flower of the Virgin Mary; O illustrious Son of David, the Only-Begotten of the Supreme Father, write, I pray Thee, with a strong and clear hand, upon the tablets of my heart, Thy sweet and glorious Name, along with that sacred and brightly-shining Title of Thy Passion, which declared the cause of Thy death; that so I may keep it ever before my eyes, and may often read it to the praise of Thy Most Holy Name. May that Title be the comfort of my heart in distress, may it be my special protection when temptations assail me; may the evil spirit depart from me; may the lust of concupiscence die out within me; may the whole world have a bitter taste to me, when I think, or read, of "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*" For of a truth nothing is more sweet than Jesus, nothing more wholesome, nothing more helpful; nothing can be brighter, nothing more pure, nothing more holy than the Nazarene; nothing can be more worthy of honour than the King of the Jews, nothing more powerful, nothing more exalted. Therefore let no enemy think to withstand me; let no plague think to touch me; let no calamity think to crush me, so long as I humbly invoke Thy aid, O my Jesus, or call to mind Thy Passion, or dwell with heart and lips upon Thy Title "*Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*"

O Jesus, above all else deserving of my love, Thou art my King and my God, dear to me above everything, far above all the praise that I can give Thee. Dear to me wert Thou in the Manger, still

dearer wert Thou on the Cross; dearest of all art Thou when sitting upon the Throne of Thy Kingdom; for though, in the weakness of Thy flesh, Thou didst hang upon the Cross, yet now by the Power of God, Thou livest, and art sitting at the Right Hand of the Father, exalted above every creature for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XXV

Of the suffering of the Lord with His Mother's grief, and His commendation the one to the other of Blessed Mary and St. John

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Comforter of all that mourn, for the sorrowful glance which, in Thy mercy, Thou didst cast upon Thy dearly-loved Mother as she stood beneath Thy Cross, worn out with the intensity of her grief. How intense that grief was, Thou alone best knew, from Whom the most secret motions of her heart were not hid; for, upon earth, there was nothing more dear to Thee than Thy Virgin Mother; and she loved nothing so much as Thee, her God and her Son, Whom, although Thou wert the Fruit of her womb, she knew, without doubt, to be her Maker and the Lord of all things. When, therefore, she saw Thee, Whom she loved above all else, hanging upon the Cross, her heart was in Thee, rather than in herself; and being lifted, as it were, outside herself, she will, in spirit, have hung with Thee upon the Cross, even when, in the body, she was standing weeping at its foot.

I praise and glorify Thee for the exceeding great compassion with which, as a Son, Thou didst con-

dole with Thy most sorrowful Mother, to whom all Thy anguish was as if it had been her own; who wept over each wound of Thine, as if it had been inflicted upon herself; and whose heart was racked with fresh pain as often as, with a mother's eye, she saw blood flowing from Thy Body, or heard Thy voice as Thou spakest to her from the Cross.

I laud and magnify Thee for those most gracious words, few in number though they were, which Thou didst at length speak to Thy disconsolate Mother, when Thou didst commend her to Thy well-beloved disciple John, as to a most faithful steward, and didst bring together in an indissoluble bond of love the Virgin and him who was vowed to chastity, saying to her: "*Woman, behold thy son,*" and then to Thy disciple: "*Behold thy mother.*"

O happy union, and pleasing commendation, shared and consecrated by virgin purity! For in these words Thou didst on the one hand show forth Thy loving care for Thy Mother's honour, by giving her the protection of Thy chaste disciple, and on the other hand Thou didst, as it were, supply Thy place to her, by assigning to her another son, who, by the chastity of his life was suited to give her a home, and who might be depended on to provide her with the necessaries of life. What Thou didst was what Thy feeling as a son prompted Thee to do, that so the spotless Virgin, who was Thy holy Mother, might always have a faithful attendant; and when deprived of Thy most sweet presence, might never feel as if she were left alone in the world, and as a stranger among the Jews.

May this sacred arrangement, this most fitting commendation by thy Son, be pleasing to thee, O loving Mother of God: welcome thankfully the disciple whom thy Son Jesus has assigned to thee.

This is John, the Apostle, chosen as one of unstained life, more beloved than the other apostles, gentle in his manners, kind in his speech, bashful in his looks, modest in his carriage, temperate in his food, homely in his dress, dutiful and obedient: this is the disciple whom thy Son loved, who is related to thee by blood, well spoken of by all, pure in mind, chaste in body, pleasing to God, beloved of all men, fitted in every way to be thy companion, O Mother of God. I know indeed full well, that thy will was, and is, in accordance with thy Son's will, and that it must always have been thy supreme wish to do what was ordained by Him, Who in all that He did sought not His Own Will, but His Father's glory; and so I cannot doubt that when, as the hour of His departure was at hand, He left John to supply His place to thee, what He did was pleasing to thee.

Take to thyself, then, holy John, the precious treasure thus made over to thee. Take to thyself the holy Virgin, the Mother of Jesus, worthy of all reverence, the Queen of Heaven, the Mistress of the World, thy own beloved aunt, thy mother's sister. Till now the Blessed Virgin Mary has been called thy aunt by right of blood; henceforth, by special grace entrusted to thy care, she shall be called thy mother, by a more sacred title, that is by right Divine: and thou too, who hast hitherto been known as the son of Zebedee, according to the flesh, as the brother of James the Greater, as the kinsman of thy Lord and Saviour, and afterwards as his disciple, shalt now receive the new name of Mary's adopted son; and shalt minister to her with the love of a son, over and above that love of a nephew which thou always hadst for her. Do then as Christ bids thee; fulfil the holy

commendatory injunction, and thou shalt be well-pleasing to all men, and honoured throughout the world.

Most blessed John did as Jesus had bidden him from the Cross. From that hour the disciple took her to his home, watched over her, carefully ministered to her, most faithfully submitted himself to her, and loved her with his whole heart, as if she had been his own mother.

Be glad and rejoice, O blessed Saint John, in the trust committed to thee: for what in all the world Christ held most dear, that He made over to thy care. He gave thee great wealth, when He bequeathed to thee Mary, whom even the Holy Angels cannot worthily praise. To Saint Peter Christ gave charge of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, but He made thee His Own Mother's chamberlain. Formerly Mary was betrothed to holy Joseph, but now she is entrusted to thee as to her second guardian. To holy Joseph an Angel had said: "*Fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife*," now it is the Lord of Angels Himself Who says to thee: "*Behold thy Mother*," in order that, as Joseph was not wanting in his duty to the Virgin at the birth of her Son, so neither shouldst thou fail in thy duty to her, whether at the hour of Christ's Passion, or in the long years that will follow after His Ascension into Heaven. Had indeed most blessed John the Baptist been alive, I should have thought that he, by right of near kinship, and on account of his chaste life, would have been a fitting person to act as guardian, and as the Bridegroom's friend: but since Joseph is no more,[1] it is for thee so supply the place of all

[1] We do not know for certain whether he was then alive or dead; but John, after he had been long kept

those dear ones, and to be to her as a son instead of Christ, Who has been taken from her side. I trust in the Lord Jesus, that thy brother James and the rest of the Apostles will hail with joy this arrangement; that not one of thy friends will be envious of thee, and that every faithful soul will contentedly rejoice with thee.

O blessed Saint John, this high reward was won for thee by thy many virtues, to wit, by thy perfect contempt of the world, thy love for Jesus, the gentleness of thy manners, thy virginal chastity, thy even-mindedness, thy frankness, the purity of thy conscience, and the probity of thy life. Take, then, the Mother of Christ into thy care, and so doing thou shalt win abundant grace; much profit shalt thou have through her, and high shalt thou rise; for by her words thou shalt be instructed, by her example thou shalt be edified, by her prayers thou shalt be helped, by her admonitions thou shalt be inspirited; thou shalt be inflamed with love; thou shalt rise higher in devotion; thou shalt be lifted up in meditation; thou shalt be filled with joy; thou shalt abound in consolation; thou shalt enjoy the things of heaven: from her lips thou shalt hear Divine mysteries; thou shalt be taught things hidden from the world; thou shalt understand what others can only wonder at; thou shalt comprehend things unspeakable. By dwelling with her, thou shalt become more chaste than before; thou shalt remain altogether pure; thou shalt increase in holiness; thou shalt become more and more devout. Her every glance is modesty itself, her every word prudence, her

in prison, had been put to death; and now Jesus also was about to die, and soon to pass from His Mother's sight.

every act justice, her scripture-reading Jesus, her meditation Christ, her contemplation God. The beauty of her countenance bursts forth as light; her looks, though awe-inspiring, keep no one from approaching her; her refinement brings purity to all who behold her; her words drive away every evil thing. Such, and so great, is the high rank of Mary, that she surpasses all other Saints in purity and grace; and to her shalt thou be as a guardian[1] assigned to her by the Most High King of Heaven Himself. Be, then, diligent in thy attendance on her; pay to her the honour which is her due; watch over her to the best of thy ability. Stand at the foot of the cross; watch by the Virgin's side; when she is worn out support her in thine arms; embrace Mary; when she is fainting, raise her up; when she is bathed in tears, comfort her; weep with her when she weeps; sigh with her when she sighs; go with her when she walks; stand with her when she stands; sit with her when she sits. Leave her not in her grief; do that work of mercy; and then get ready for the burial of Jesus, Who is about to die. Take the Mother with thee to the Sepulchre, bring her back to the city, take her to thy house; comfort her who is the comforter of all who are forlorn. Thou art in this case permitted to be the consoler of one of higher rank than thyself; be then to her as a ministering angel. In His Agony Christ was strengthened by an angel; although He needed it not, yet He willed to be attended by one beneath Him, and He refused not the angelic consolation.

[1] [The word used in the original is *secretarius*, sacristan. Probably the idea meant to be expressed is that St. John was the Divinely appointed custodian (*trésorier*) of the most precious treasure of the Church.]

Behold, O John, who art so very dear to me, to what holy duties thou art called; of what high estate that Virgin is who has been commended to thee, and Whose Mother she is who has been entrusted to thy care!

Now, therefore, I humbly beseech thee to pray earnestly for me, a sinner, that I too may be on fire with love for Christ, and may be more devout than ever in praising the Blessed Virgin, and more and more full of compassion for her grief.

CHAPTER XXVI

Of the transcendent virtues of the Blessed Virgin, and of her grief and tears

I BLESS thee, and I praise and glorify thee, O Virgin Mary, holy Mother of God, for all the good gifts abundantly bestowed upon thee by God; for thy virtues without number; and for the very great privileges of grace, by which thou wast so remarkably distinguished above all the Saints upon earth, in being thought worthy to become the Mother of God, to hold in thy lap, to clasp in thy blessed arms, to lift and to carry about, the Word of God, Who of thy substance had taken Flesh.

I bless, and praise, and honour thee, O chosen Mother, and lowly handmaid, of God, for all the loving service, and all the needed help, which thou didst render to Christ, thy Son according to the flesh; for all the persecution and want, and for all the toil and fatigue, which thou didst so uncomplainingly undergo for Him.

I bless, and praise, and venerate thee, O illustrious Mary, Mother and daughter of the Everlasting King, for all the sweet converse which thou so often hadst with Jesus ; for all the Divine words to which, as they fell from His Lips, thou didst so discreetly listen, treasuring them up in thy chaste breast, and sweetly meditating upon them in thy heart. I venerate thee for the splendid consolations which thou didst so often receive from Him ; for the very great joy and rejoicing of heart which thou didst, so long, and so wistfully, experience from His presence, and from the grace breathed forth upon thee by the Holy Spirit of God.

I bless thee, and I praise and magnify thee, my adorable Lady, Holy Mary, for that most pure and holy life, so pleasing to God and to His Angels, which thou didst so long time live with Jesus in retirement, and in great poverty ; in which thou wast tried by many afflictions and distresses ; by which thou didst leave to all faithful servants of Christ an example to be by them devoutly imitated ; and by which thou wilt have very greatly profited the universal Church, in the difficulties which she must encounter so long as the world shall last.

I bless thee, and praise and celebrate thee, O Mary, most kind and most devoted Mother of God, for all thy devout exercises and sacred meditations on the law of God by day and by night ; for thy most fervent prayers, and tears and fastings, offered with such great earnestness before the Throne of God, for the conversion of sinners and the perseverance of the just; for thy profound compassion for the poor and infirm, for those tempted and in anguish of soul ; and for thy consuming thirst for the salvation of the human race, the price of which thou knewest to be the cruel

death of thy Son. And although thou didst love thy only Son with love unspeakable, yet didst thou not hold Him back from ascending the dreadful Cross, but didst with all thy heart submit thyself, together with thy Son, to what had been ordained of God. Thou wast ever forward in condoling with Him in all His pain and anguish, and didst bravely follow Him to the foot of the shameful Cross, taking no heed of the flight of His disciples, nor fearing the savagery of the Jews, preferring to go to death with Him, to deserting thy Son at a time of such anguish and distress.

I bless thee, I praise and extol thee, most faithful and loving Mother of God, heavenly Mary, for that constancy in firm faith and perfect love, which thou didst show, when, on the flight of some of the apostles from fear, and when others only followed their Lord, as if ashamed of Him, thou alone, in the Passion of thy Son, didst never cease to keep burning the unquenchable light of faith; nothing doubting that in three days thy Son would rise again, as He, with His Own Lips, had very clearly foretold. For, when all the friends of Jesus had forsaken Him and fled, thou, O most sorrowful Mother, passing through the raging, surging mob, didst, with a humble following of women, hasten to the Hill of Calvary; that so thou mightest be as near as could be to thy Son, about to die upon the Cross; and mightest once more behold alive Him, from Whom, before His death, thou wert about to hear the words of loving committal to Saint John.

I bless thee, I praise and heartily commend thee, O holy and immaculate Virgin Mary, for thy sorrow-stricken presence at the foot of the Cross of Jesus, where, weary and in anguish, thou didst so

long stand, pierced with the sword of grief, as the prophet Simeon had foretold of thee. I praise and heartily commend thee for the many tears which thou didst at that time so freely shed; for the supreme fidelity, and unswerving constancy, which thou didst show to thy dying Son, in His last need; for the anguish of heart which thou didst so acutely feel at the moment of His death; for thy face running down with tears, when thou didst behold Him hanging before thee dead; for that loving embrace with which thou didst take Him into a Mother's arms, and with a wail of lament didst clasp Him to thy bosom; for thy mournful journey to the place of burial, when, in spite of thy excessive grief, thou didst follow the bearers of the sacred corpse, and didst see It placed in the tomb, and enclosed therein by a great stone; for thy sorrowing return from the tomb, and for thy entrance into thy new abode, where, together with the many faithful ones there assembled, thou didst again bitterly mourn the death of the Son of thy love, and from the eyes of them all didst draw forth tears of sympathy with thy grief.

Do thou, then, O my soul, mourn also with the sorrowing Virgin, the weeping Mother, the loving Mary. If thou lovest Mary, thou oughtest to share her sorrow, that so she may come to help thee in thy time of need, See how the loving Mother bewails her only Son, Mary of Cleophas bewails her dearly loved Nephew, Mary Magdalene bewails the Physician of her soul, John bewails his most sweet Master, all the apostles bewail their Lord taken away from their midst. Who would not shed tears when so many shed tears together? Great indeed was that wailing in Jerusalem. Stand thou, then, here a while, and let that Vir-

gin Mother, whose bitter tears cannot fail to stir the inmost recesses of thy heart, teach thee what mourning means. She who is now standing at the Cross's foot, pierced through with grievous sorrow, was only a few short years ago standing by a manger's side, her ears ringing with the music of the heavenly choir; she who is now tormented by the shrieking of the Jews, was but a short while since being comforted by the voices of Angels; she who is now clothed in a garment of mourning was not long ago being venerated by the Holy Kings. The lifeblood of that Son, Whose snow-white cheek was once pressed so fondly to her own, is now falling upon her drop by drop; she beholds, hanging between two thieves, Him Whom she has so often seen working mighty wonders in the midst of the people. She sees, made like to a leper by the loathsomeness of His Wounds, Him by the touch of Whose Hand she has seen full many a leper cleansed. She has before her eyes, racked with pain of every kind, Him, Who used to heal of every disease those who were sick. She beholds, given over to death, that Son at Whose word dead Lazarus came back to life. All that was pleasant in Him is now turned to sadness, all that was sweet in Him is now turned to bitterness. With such a tempest of evils is the bright-shining Star of the Sea surrounded; but a mind fixed steadfastly upon God is not to be overcome by the wickedness of men. She stands therefore at the Cross's foot, constant, and faithful, patient, and loving; not heeding those who threaten her with death; not shrinking from the insults of those who heap curses upon her. She bears it all calmly, and strives to follow the example of her Son's humility in making no

answer to her cruel enemies. Not a harsh word does she speak, not an indignant gesture does she use; but she heaves many a sigh, she weeps bitterly, she is bowed down with sorrow, she suffers with each pang of her dying Son, her affliction is more than she can bear. And yet she is not angry with those who are crucifying her Son, she prays for those who are using Him so despitefully, she is sorry for those who are mocking Him, she pities the blasphemers of Christ. It was thus that the Mother of Jesus, bathed in tears, stood at the foot of the Cross, bringing comfort to all who are in trouble or distress by the example of her meekness and her patience.

O all ye who pass along the Way of Calvary, turn your eyes upon Holy Mary as she stands there in her grief. Look to the right of the Cross, and mark there Mary the Mother of Christ, and say was ever sorrow like her sorrow, was ever in the world a mother who suffered with her son in loving anguish such as hers; for in all the tortured limbs of Jesus she was herself tortured in soul, and she became a martyr every time she looked upon the bleeding wounds of her Son.

See to it then, O faithful soul, that thou lay up in the recesses of thy heart all these things. Be brave and meek when tribulation comes upon thee. Be not disquieted, nor fall into despair, if that which thou dost value most is taken from thee; or if that which thou thinkest to be needful for thee is refused thee; for it is those friends of Jesus, who are most dear to Him, who are wont to be tried the most. If God spared not His Own Son; but delivered Him up for us all to sufferings so grievous, how canst thou in this life seek for happiness? If Christ sought not Himself, but be-

came obedient, and ready to undergo all that was most vile and painful, why dost thou shrink, as thou dost, from toil and distress, and dost not rather, for the love of the Crucified, cling to things that are hard and displeasing? If He allowed His Own most Holy Mother to be grievously afflicted in this world; if He allowed her to be often in tribulation, to endure great anguish of soul, and to shed many tears, how canst thou expect to live in this world free of worries? And if thou callest to mind all the men who were the friends of God, thou wilt not find one who passed through the waves of this troublesome world without being severely tried. Take then to thyself from Him Who was Crucified for thee, and from His Blessed Mother, an example of unwearied patience; and in return for the infinite yearning of Jesus for thy Salvation, shrink not from enduring some small affliction; that so, when His Glory shall be revealed, thou mayest have the perpetual joy of His Countenance. The most gracious Mother of Jesus knows how to suffer lovingly with those that suffer. From what she herself suffered, she has learnt to be kind and pitiful to those in distress, and she will not forget her poor ones; she will listen to their prayers; she will in due time help those who call upon her; she will show favour to all those who are devoted to her.

O most merciful Lord Jesus, sweet Son of Mary, shed down upon me, I beseech Thee, the grace of holy tears, and pierce my heart with a wound of very deep compassion, such as I know that to have been with which Thy loving Mother's heart was pierced. Look upon me with those Eyes full of pity, with which Thou didst behold Thy Mother and Thy disciple standing in tears at the foot of

the Cross, what time Thou didst commend the one to the other, and didst bid them farewell in those touching words: "*Behold thy son: behold thy Mother.*" Visit me, I beseech Thee, with Thy salvation before my death, and make me to hear those words which blessed John heard Thee speak to him from the Cross: "*Behold thy mother*"; that so, by hearing those words, my soul may be kept safe from fear of the enemy, who goes about like a roaring lion seeking to devour it.

Holy Mary, my most gentle Mistress, most faithful Advocate of all Christians, by all those excellent merits, which made thee so well-pleasing to God; by each of all those motherly services which thou didst so willingly render to thy Son according to the flesh; and by all those bitter tears, which thou didst shed when witnessing His Passion, I beseech thee, to vouchsafe to have pity upon me, thy poor suppliant; to take me, with thy wonted tenderness, into thy motherly care; and to number me among those of thy servants who are the objects of thy special love.

O glorious Virgin Mary, my only hope, come to me, I pray thee; show me thy face when the hour of my departure is at hand; and gently and sweetly turn upon me those pitying eyes of thine, with which thou didst so often look joyously upon the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, and which at His Passion were wet with so many tears. Stand then by my side, O most holy Mother of Jesus, with thy sweet virgin train, and the blessed company of all the saints, even as thou didst faithfully persevere to the end in standing by the Cross of thy dearly-loved Son, when He was about to die; for after thy only Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, I know no other who is so powerful, or so

ready to help, as thou, most gracious mother of all who are in need of comfort.

CHAPTER XXVII

Of the lonely dereliction of the Lord Jesus on the Cross

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most loving Son of the Father's Love, for Thy awful and lonely dereliction on the Cross, when, at the moment of Thy direst need, as if Thou hadst been an alien and of no account; as if Thou hadst not been the very Son of God; as if Thou hadst no power or merit of any kind soever, Thou wast forsaken of God the Father, by the host of Heaven, and by every creature upon earth—at which time Thy most sorrowful Mother, attended only by a few poor women and by the disciple to whose care Thou hadst committed her, alone stood by Thee; and she, by reason of the grief and anguish of her soul, could scarce speak to Thee one word.

I praise and glorify Thee for that strong cry which burst from Thy lips, when, in the hearing of all those that stood by, Thou didst utter those woeful words: "*Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani.*" By those words, O my Lord, Thou didst make abundantly plain the intensity of Thy anguish, and the withdrawal from Thee of consolation of every kind. Thou didst declare by them the measure of what Thou wast enduring for the salvation of us men, by whom Thou wast in return being set at nought, nay, rather wast being treated as the vilest of malefactors, and as one quite unworthy to live

Mark well, O my soul, this Word of Jesus; for it was spoken specially for thy learning. Consider—Oh the wonder of it!—how the Lord of all things, Who has need of nothing, is reduced to such a depth of misery that He tells forth His need into His Father's ears; that He Who orders all things as co-worker with His Father, complains that His Father has forsaken Him; that He Who upholds all things by the word of His Power proclaims the burden laid upon Him to be too heavy for Him to bear; that He, Who is ever ready to comfort the mourner and the oppressed, confesses Himself to be an outcast and forlorn; that He Who is the Hearer of prayer, Whose Ears are ever open to the cry of the poor, humbly asks the question: "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" Of a truth, from the beginning of His Passion until now, no words so woeful had yet been spoken.

It was for me, O Christ—I know it well—it was for me that in Thy passible human nature Thou didst utter this cry upon the Cross; for Thy dereliction is my comfort, Thy bitter cry is my support, Thy weakness is my strength; Thy sufferings have paid the penalty for all my sins and shortcomings. Thou art the heavenly Physician; moved by Thy infinite love and compassion, Thou didst submit to be overwhelmed by unfathomable sorrow and anguish: and thus it is that with the weak Thou canst be weak, with the mourner Thou canst mourn, with the sinner Thou canst be sad, with the oppressed Thou canst grieve, and for all Thy weak members Thou canst offer up prayer with strong crying and with tears. Those words which Thou didst utter were not spoken by way of rebellion or of despair: they

were the cry of Thy human nature and sensibility. Thy Flesh was suffering the penalty of guilt, of which it had never known the taint. Thy Soul was enjoying the highest bliss; but Thy Body, all innocent as It was, was enduring punishment than which none could be more severe. Thy Divinity brought no relief to Thy anguish; but It worked a miracle in Thy power of endurance, that so for the Redemption of our race nothing might be wanting.

What faithful soul is there, which, after meditating on these things, can help sharing Thy anguish? What heart is there so hard as not to be pierced by that exceeding bitter cry? Even the elements, devoid of feeling as they are, stood unmistakably aghast in sympathy with Thy sufferings; for from the sixth until the ninth hour the sun withdrew his light from the world, refusing to shine upon men who were so unworthy of it; and the earth quaked, shuddering at the insults heaped upon its Creator, grieving over the sufferings which the Author of life had to endure, and exclaiming that it could not bear to see Him die. When therefore the sun mourns, and the earth trembles and quakes, see thou to it, O man endowed with reason, that thou too takest part in their grief; that thou dost fully mark the cry of Jesus, why the cry was uttered, and what it meant. Note how, in all His tribulation and anguish, the Lord Jesus remained meek and patient, and how all the words which fell from His Lips were words of sweetness and of love. His prayer is addressed to His Father in Heaven; He calls upon God alone; Him alone does He tell of His desolation. He seeks no comfort from His Mother; He asks no help from His friends.

Here, then, is instruction for thee, from the Mouth of Jesus; He shows thee what thou shouldst do when thou art in distress. Art thou suffering from some bodily infirmity; hast thou some mental trouble or unhappiness to bear; art thou looked down upon by others; hast thou lost the favour of men by reason of thy poverty or other defect; be not cast down, be not impatient; but use thy trouble as a stepping-stone in thy spiritual progress, use it as an opportunity for sweet converse with Jesus as He hangs upon the Cross, despised and rejected of men, and with the Father's Face hidden from Him for a season; and meditate upon those words which He spake: "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"

When thou art feeling weak and ill, try to be patient and gentle; do not grumble if every now and then thy attendants neglect thee, or thy brethren fail to visit thee. Think of Jesus in His desolation upon the Cross, and shrink from complaining of thy petty discomfort; pray Him to visit thee, seek thy consolation from Him, Who is able to comfort thee, even when thou art forsaken and alone. Set no store by the fleeting solace which is all that this world can give; make not too much of the attachment of thy friends; desire rather to have God's angels watching over thee, and call upon the Saints to pray for thee. Lift up thine eyes to Him Who hangs above thee on the Cross; meditate on His Sacred Wounds; pray to the glorious Virgin; keep Mary ever in mind; pray earnestly to her; for she never left the Cross's foot, and she heard Jesus crying with a loud voice to the Father. Close thine eyes to all things earthly, lift up thy soul to thy home which is above. Cling to God as thy Father, to Jesus as

thy Brother, to Mary as thy Mother, to the Angels as thy friends, to the Saints as thy kinsfolk. Of that noble and exalted stock thou comest too, not by natural birth, but by the spiritual freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. Surrounded by protectors such as these; with loving patrons such as these ready at thy call, thou mayest in confidence await the coming of the day of doom, and hope for mercy at the hands of thy most loving Saviour.

O supreme and adorable Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, have respect, I entreat Thee, to the prayer which Thy servant now offers to Thee by the hands of Thy Beloved Son, as He hangs upon the Cross; forgive me all the sins which I have at any time committed; withhold not from me the gift of Thy heavenly grace; suffer me not to be tempted above that which I am able to bear, nor to be unduly distressed by the fiery darts of the wicked one. Prove me, O Lord, and try me, as Thou knowest it to be good for me; but keep my soul in Thy Hands, and with every temptation make for me such a way of escape that I may be able to bear it. That which the cunning enemy of my soul has contrived for my hurt, turn Thou, I beseech Thee, into a means of salvation, and of the shedding forth upon me of yet more grace. The more I feel the weight of the trouble which is laid upon me, and the less I am able to put my trust in what man can do for me, the more powerfully and the more closely be Thou at hand to help me; for in the hour of a man's greatest need Thou art of all friends the most true. And if, when trouble is laid upon me, Thou shouldst see fit to leave me for a while without consolation, give me then, I pray Thee, grace to bear even this patiently,

and in trusting faith to commit all my burden into Thy Hands; to store up in the deepest recesses of my heart the thought of that time of desolation through which Thy Beloved Son, in Whom Thou art well pleased, had to pass; and to remember that in His extremity, when bereft of the help of all his friends, He was mindful of Thee, and of Thee alone.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Of the thirst of the Lord Jesus as He hung upon the Cross

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Fountain of living water, and Source of that wisdom that maketh wise unto salvation, for the exceeding great thirst which Thou didst suffer upon the Cross, when, by reason of Thy sacred and precious Blood having been poured forth, and all the natural fluids of Thy Body having been exhausted by Thy grievous tortures, Thou didst—besides Thy burning thirst for our salvation—endure an agony of bodily thirst; and as one utterly poor and needy, didst ask for drink, saying, "*I thirst.*" But even this small request there was none who would heed; none was there who would even offer a cup of cold water to Him Who made all water to flow. Nay more, some of the bystanders, on hearing what Thou hadst said, were not only not moved to pity, but became yet more unmerciful; and that they might gratify the venomous hatred of their wicked hearts, filled a sponge with vinegar mingled with gall, and put to Thy sweet Mouth

that most bitter draught, which was not fit to be given as drink to a dog.

I laud and honour Thee for Thy most gracious self-restraint in accepting and tasting that most nauseous draught, which by way of expiatory penance for the sin of our first parents, Thou didst taste, in order that as the tasting of the forbidden fruit brought death into the world, so Thy tasting of this bitter draught might be to us a healing remedy.

But woe be to thee, thou impious people of the Jews, of all races of men the most stiffnecked and full of wickedness! How couldst thou sink to such a depth of depravity as to release Barabbas and crucify Christ? How couldst thou be brought to such a pitch of madness as to offer vinegar to One Who asked for a drink to stay His thirst? Put it before the High Priest or the Ruler of thy people, and see if he would drink it. What has Christ done to thee, or wherein has Jesus of Nazareth wronged thee? Answer me, I pray thee. Did not God cause manna to fall from heaven for thee; did not God draw for thee water from the stony rock, that thou mightest eat and drink to the full? And now, in return for the sweet manna that He gave thee, thou offerest Him wine mingled with myrrh; and in return for the abundant water which He gave thee, thou offerest not a drop to Christ, when He is athirst. Even now, did He will it, Christ could make all thy water brackish; and deprived of bread and water thou wouldst soon perish for lack of that, which, asked for pity's sake, thou now refusest to give. If Christ had willed to have not a nauseous but a refreshing draught, how willingly and how swiftly would the angels, who, when His threefold temptation by the evil one

was ended, ministered food to Him, have ministered to Him the life-giving dew of Heaven, more refreshing far than all the water upon earth. But He would not assert Himself, or show His power: He willed rather to work a wonder of patience and endurance, that so He might set an example to those who are professed to poverty.

Do thou, then, O disciple of Jesus, drink deeply from this bitter cup as a cure for the indulgence of thy appetites; for if thou wouldst sup with Christ in the Kingdom of His Father, thy heart must not be set upon dainty food, or draughts of costly wine; thou must not long for soft beds or fine clothes. Such things are out of keeping with the spotless life of Jesus, and with His most bitter Passion. Be on thy guard against yielding to the lusts of the flesh; keep thy sensual impulses in check by being moderate in thy food; and if thou shouldst have exceeded by taking too much or too dainty food, then by daily toil and nightly vigil chasten thyself for thy fault, keeping ever sorrowfully in mind the bitter cup of Christ.

O Jesus, Heavenly Manna, and most sweet Nectar, Thou to Whom, when Thou wast grievously athirst in Thy agony on the Cross, vinegar and gall were given to drink, nor would anyone give Thee even a drop of water, by which Thou mightest have been refreshed; grant that at my meals I may be careful to remember this bitter cup of Thine, that so I may not be too anxious about bodily nourishment, but may earnestly apply my mind to the holy words which are being read. May I learn to take only so much food as is needful for me; may I take it in Thy fear, and may I devoutly thank Thee for all Thy benefits bestowed upon me. May I be content, and that not grudg-

ingly, with the food set before me, no matter how scanty or uninviting it may be: nay more, may I feel myself unworthy of even the poorest scraps, and shrink from living in idleness at the cost of other men's labours. Grant that I may hunger after the meat that perisheth not, but endureth unto everlasting life. Grant that I may thirst after the fountain of life eternal, and that I may from time to time be fed with a crumb of that living bread which is set before those who eat at Thy Table in Heaven, and may be allowed to taste, be it ever so little, of its inward savour; that so I may be able experimentally to understand how refreshing is that Spirit, O Lord, which Thou as a free gift dost shed forth upon the children of grace.

CHAPTER XXIX

Of the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the death of Christ; and of the Word "It is finished"

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Revealer of hidden mysteries, and Fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets, for Thy most perfect accomplishment of the Father's Will in that short and welcome word with which, as soon as Thou hadst received the vinegar, Thou didst close, as it were, the story of Thy Life by saying: "*It is finished.*" This was as if Thou hadst openly said: "Now is fulfilled all that the old Law foretold concerning me, all that was prefigured by the sacrificial rites and by the ceremonies of the former dispensation. Now are actually brought to pass the inspired words of the holy prophets, and

the long-cherished desires of the Patriarchs. Now is all that is needed for the Redemption of the human race fully worked out; now has been accomplished in a perfect way, both as to place and time, all that Holy Scripture has recorded of the promises of God. The few things that remain will of a surety in due time be made good. I have fulfilled My Father's command: He sent me into the world; and I have finished the work which He gave me to do.

"Many a time and oft have I healed the sick; I have given abundant proofs of My Divine Power; as the Father has taught Me have I spoken in the world, and no part of saving doctrine have I kept back from the ears of the faithful. For three and thirty years have I been a pilgrim upon earth, and have dwelt as a friend among men; many a time and oft have I been wearied by journeyings: cruelly have I been slandered by My enemies; I have been betrayed by one of My disciples; I have been deserted by My friends; I have been held captive by My enemies, and have been scourged by their underlings; I have been condemned by judges, and mocked by Chief Priests; and now, guiltless as I am, I am hanging here upon the Cross. What is there that I ought to have done more than I have done? What ought I to have suffered that I have not suffered? If I have failed in doing or in suffering aught, I am ready before My departure to make it good: but no, by My death, I shall satisfy to the last farthing every debt. To-day therefore do I pronounce all to be accomplished. Nor do I allow the term of My life to be further prolonged; but I lay down My life for My sheep, out of pure love for them; and at this hour, which I know to be the same as

that in which the first Adam, by taking of the forbidden tree, incurred the penalty of eternal death, I take upon myself, of my own free choice, in satisfaction of the debt due by sinners for their sins, the penalty of the death of My Body, a penalty to which I am not liable for any sin of My own. The things concerning Me shall shortly have an end. Henceforth I shall not speak much in this world: I shall not long be in it, because I haste to the Father. Toil shall now cease, sorrow and mourning shall flee away, fighting shall have an end, trouble shall be no more, and at My death Death itself shall be destroyed: nothing more remains to be done, except that I should commend My Spirit to My Father, and should quit My Body until the third day. I know well that kindly-hearted men will not forget the ties of friendship, but will take It away and bury It in a new tomb. To show therefore that the demands of justice under the old Law are fully satisfied, and to establish the new law, I speak My last short Word to all who may hear it, and say: '*It is finished.*'"

O Lord Jesus Christ, most illustrious and most wise Master, as Thou sayest, and as Thou bearest witness, so it is in truth: Thy word who can question? All that Thou sayest Thou dost attest by Divine Acts, and dost show to be supported by the utterances of the Prophets. The time has now come when Thou shouldst rest from all the work which Thou hast done upon earth. Thou, O Lord, in the beginning didst jointly with the Father create all things; and now, with the co-operation of the Father, Thou hast made all things new. In six days Thou didst accomplish the work of the making of the world, and now in the sixth age of

the world Thou hast finished the work of man's Redemption. On the sixth day Thou didst form man from the slime of the earth, and on the sixth day Thou didst redeem him with Thy Blood. On the sixth day Adam was tempted and deceived by Eve; on the sixth day Thou wast announced by an Angel, and conceived in the Virgin's womb. On the sixth day man sinned, and forfeited Paradise; on the sixth day Thou didst suffer for our sins, and by Thy mercy the thief was received into Paradise. In order, then, that the things which are new should correspond with the things which are old, the things of these last days with the things of the days which are gone before, it was well that the sixth word from the Cross should be: "*It is finished.*"

Onward then, Lord Jesus, whithersoever Thou willest; go back to Thy Father in Heaven, for Thou hast finished Thy great work of love upon earth. Go before Thy unworthy servants; make ready the way for them, that they may follow Thee with all speed. Set open that gate of the Heavenly Kingdom, which Adam's transgression had so long kept shut. Go, visit the Holy Fathers resting in Abraham's Bosom; give light to those who are sitting in darkness; break in pieces the power of the devil; loose the prisoners' chains; give rest to the weary; comfort those who mourn; deliver those who are looking for Thy coming; bring forth Thy captives from the dungeons of Hades; and when Thou shalt have led them forth and made them to dwell with the angels in the mansions of Heaven above, then, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom, remember me, I pray Thee, and lead me forth from my prison-house, from this my fleshly tabernacle of slime; from my present state which

is so full of peril; from this unstable and troublesome world.

But see to it, O follower of Christ, that thou imitate Thy Master in that of which this Word speaks to thee: work on while time and strength for work are given thee: carry through what thou hast begun; that so, when the evening of life's day closes in on thee, thou too, with Jesus, Who has befriended Thee as it ran its course, mayest be able to say: "*It is finished.*" Walk therefore in the way of true virtue; follow after righteousness; make up thy mind to fight even unto death against thy besetting sins; that so thou mayest lay hold on eternal life, and mayest be able to say with St. Paul: "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" Thou hast yet somewhat left to do, thou hast yet to bear thy burden for a while: but soon the hour will come, when, being *made perfect in a short space, thou mayest fulfil a long time.*

O Jesus Christ, Who orderest all things in Heaven and in earth, Who art the brightest and most perfect Model of every virtue, and the endless Reward of every good work, direct, I pray Thee, all my actions in the way of Thy commandments, and purify and enlighten every thought of my mind. Teach me to begin, humbly and with an eye to the praise and glory of Thy Blessed Name, every work which I undertake; to be diligent in performing it, and to bring it to a happy end. Grant that I may not grow slack before the time appointed of the Father; but that until I breathe my last breath, I may labour night and day in the vineyard of holy Religion for the penny of eternal life, and may work my very hardest in the workshop of our Heavenly Father's business;

that so, after many a struggle and much hard toil, I may at length, when my last hour shall come, be able by Thy mercy joyfully to say with Thee: "*It is finished.*" And do Thou, O good Jesus, mindful of what in this world I have had to endure, give me for my labour its hire, for my weariness repose, for my sorrow joy, for my struggle a crown, for my dishonour glory, for my misery happiness; for Thou wert and art the last end of all that I have done during my sojourn here on earth. Be Thou my Recompense in the Kingdom of Heaven; for Thee, and Thee only, Who art the joy and the glory of all Thy Saints, do I desire to possess as the Reward of my labours.

CHAPTER XXX

Of the woeful departure from this world of the Lord Jesus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Life of the living, Hope of the dying, Saviour of all who trust in Thee, for Thy departure for a season out of this world; and for Thy happy return, through the agony of a cruel death, and the splendid martyrdom of the Cross, to the Bosom of the Father.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy ashy paleness at the moment of death, for Thy sacred last agony, for the gradual failure of Thy bodily powers, and for the breaking of Thy Heart so full of love—all which was the penalty which Thou, the Giver of Life to all things that have breath, didst not shrink from paying, when Thou submittedst Thy-

self to the sentence of death, in order that thereby Thou mightest open to us the way to the Kingdom of Heaven.

I praise and glorify Thee for the loud cry which Thou didst utter from Thy Cross with superhuman strength; for the sad divorce and bitter parting of Thy all-glorious Soul from Thy Body so full of love; for Thy most devout commendation of Thy Soul into the Father's hands; for the meek bowing of Thy sacred and thorn-crowned Head upon Thy Breast, in token of filial obedience persisted in to the last; for Thy loving yielding-up of Thy all-holy Soul for the Salvation of the world; and for that most sacred Word in which Thou didst pour forth Thy cry of loving prayer, saying: "*Father, into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit*"—which done, Thou didst straightway draw Thy last breath, and falling into a calm sleep, didst bring Thy earthly sojourn to an end.

How precious and victorious a death was that which slew our death, and purchased for us everlasting life. May then, O Christ, Thy death always remain fixed in my remembrance; and when thinking of Thy Blessed Death may I ever be mindful of my own; that so, when the end, all so uncertain, of my life shall come, I may not give way to panic or despair. This is the hour which, from the moment of Thy conception, Thou didst ever keep in mind; and to this hour didst Thou go forward as a traveller hasting to regain his fatherland, or a keen workman longing to attain the object of his toil. From the highest Heaven Thou didst come forth into the world; from the world Thou didst descend even into Hell; and from Hell Thou hast retraced Thy steps to Thy Throne in the highest Heaven.

And now, O my soul, bewail as best thou mayest the most cruel death of the Lord thy God, Who loved thee with so vast a love; think how Jesus died, and of the signs which marked His departure from the world. See how the Holy One and the Just dies, and no man lays it to heart: no one, save His poor sorrowful Mother (who, with a scanty following of her friends, stands weeping at the Cross's foot) realizes Who, and how mighty He was. She indeed has seen her most dearly-loved Son hang there above her, with His Body naked and covered with blood; she has seen Him growing paler and paler; she has seen Him in His agony; she has heard Him crying with a loud voice, as He yielded up the Ghost. What wonder, then, that she was overwhelmed with grief, that the blood left her cheeks, and that her soul fainted within her when her Saviour hung before her lifeless on His Cross. Stand thou, then, by Mary's side, and meditate with a sad heart upon the death of Jesus. Jesus, Who had done no wrong to any man, dies naked and as a slave; nowhere could anyone be found in worse case than His. No one was ever so dear to God, no one was ever more despised of men, than was Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified by Jews. See how the world repaid Him for all the mighty works and wonders He had wrought in it. He is put to death as if He were the vilest of robbers; He dies as if He were the poorest of men. The deathbed of Jesus is not of down, but is the hard wood of the Cross: He dies with no house or even roof to cover Him, but in the open air, on a spot loathsome and disgusting; not in a private chamber, but at the place of public execution; not surrounded by His disciples, but

between two thieves; not in His Mother's embrace, but nailed to the arms of a lofty Cross. Beneath Him He had not even a bundle of straw; to cover Him He had not even a piece of the cheapest sackcloth. No pillow had He for His Head; but there was given Him instead a wreath of sharp thorns. No shoes had He for His feet, or gloves for His hands; but instead of these, iron nails driven through both hands and feet, piercing both flesh and bones. In His supreme need He had not even one attendant; but He had to tolerate instead a loathsome companion, to wit, an impenitent thief, who all the while was blaspheming Him. Comforter not only had He none; but He was forsaken by almost all those who had once been His followers and familiar friends. He could move neither hand nor foot, nor was He able to relieve His pain by turning from side to side. There He hangs nailed fast to His Cross, stretched out till He can be stretched no further, tortured to the limit of endurance, racked in every limb, with no one to care for Him, no one to help Him, no one to comfort Him, heartbroken. His tongue was all that was left Him free to use; and He used it in praying for His enemies, and in preaching to us from the pulpit of the Cross His seven most wholesome Words against the seven deadly sins. But even His Tongue was not left without its torments; for when He was athirst it was steeped in gall and vinegar. From the soles of His Feet therefore to the top of His Head, Jesus is overwhelmed in the sea of His Passion; and about the ninth hour He cries out with a loud voice, and dies.

What and how great must He have been Who with this cry draws His last breath; at Whose

passing away both Heaven and Earth mourn; at the sight of Whom death takes to flight; at Whose call the dead return to life; at seeing Whom the gates of death are broken down; Whose presence the devil cannot endure; Whose power none can resist; before Whom Hell trembles; Whom Heaven adores; Whom Angels serve, and Archangels obey; at the brightness of Whose shining Limbo becomes radiant with light, the Saints rejoice, chains fall of, and hosts of captive souls are set free. "*Indeed*," says the Centurion, "*this was the Son of God*"; for that blessed man, seeing that Jesus, after so crying out, had breathed His last, understands that the Human Body was indwelt by the invisible God, and straightway confesses that He, Whom the Jews had mocked and crucified, was the Son of God. O stony-hearted Jews, whom neither the Sufferer's anguish touches, nor the wonders which follow His death impress! Hear now, at length, ye whose ears are stopped; see now, at length, ye whose eyes are blinded, ye who ask for a sign from Heaven to be shown you! Signs are wrought in Heaven above, and on the earth beneath; the elements wait upon Christ; and in the hour of His death, while ye, unhappy ones, laugh, they are overcome with grief. The sun is darkened at high noon, because it shrinks from seeing Him die; the earth quakes with fear, because it cannot quietly endure the insult offered to God; rocks are rent asunder, and with loud noises compassionate their Creator. The veil of the temple is rent, in order that the sacred Mysteries of Christ may be made plain, when the veil of the Old Dispensation which had hidden them is done away. Christ Himself is the true Victim That taketh away all the sins of the

world. He is the spotless Lamb of God, slain at Paschal-tide upon the Cross. He is the true Priest, consecrated by God, Who offered Himself as a Sacrifice to the Father for an odour of sweetness. He is the High Priest, Who once in every year enters alone into the Holy of Holies, to pray, not for the people of the Jews only, but for the Salvation of all those who believe in Him; for this He truly did by dying, once for all, for the human race, when the fullness of time was come. The graves also are opened in order that the Resurrection of Christ with many Saints might be shown to be close at hand.

Many there were, who had come together to that sight, and saw the wonderful things that were done, who were pricked in their hearts, and returned smiting their breasts. Retire thou too, O my soul, into thy inner self; mourn with those who mourn, weep with those who weep for Christ; lest thou be found harder than the rocks, and more faithless than the Jews. Blessed are those tears which are shed for love of the Crucified. It is a dutiful and a very pleasant thing to weep for so sweet a Lord. It is a great solace to a lover's soul to weep freely in compassionating the loved one. Jesus Himself wept often for the woes of men; and moved by His boundless pity, when tears failed, He shed for us His Blood. Thy Lord Jesus Christ died for thee upon the Cross: henceforth therefore let this world be dead to thee. Learn from the death of Jesus to keep ever in mind thy own death; and strive also to prepare thyself to die; for thou knowest not when thy Lord will come; thou knowest not when thy Maker will call thee hence. Watch and pray always, that so thou mayest be found ready. So

act, and so speak, as if this day were to be thy last. Learn to die before death comes, that so when it does come, it may not seem to thee a prison-house, but rather the gate of life. Christ is dead and the prophets are dead; and soon thou too must go the way in which thy fathers have gone before thee. But great is the hope, very great the comfort, of those words of Jesus: "*He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live*"; and again: "*He who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting*." In this life, then, make Jesus thy Friend, that in the life which is to come thou mayest find mercy at His hands. Cast from thee whatever comes between thee and the love of Jesus, whatever keeps thee back from seeking the Kingdom of Heaven. Be on thy guard against everything which can stain the purity of thy conscience: give up everything which tends to destroy thy peace of mind. Keep thyself detached from the world, united to God, friendly with Christ. Walk with Jesus in the liberty of the Spirit; take no thought for the things of the world. Make ready for Jesus the chamber of thy heart, offer to Him a large upper room furnished; that so before thou goest hence, Jesus and His disciples may keep with thee a mystic Passover.

When thy health begins to fail, and thou hast cause to think that thy summons to depart hence is at hand, humbly lift up thy heart to Jesus, and say to Him in the words of Mary and of Martha: "*Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick*": for the loving and merciful Jesus, Who wept over Lazarus, and brought him back to life, is able to assuage thy pains, and after thy death to raise thee up again at the last day. At that time especi-

ally call to mind the Lord's Supper, and remember how the meek and lowly Jesus washed His disciples' feet, and before His departure instituted for their comfort the Sacrament of His Holy Body. Pray humbly, then, to the Lord Jesus that thou mayest be cleansed from the stains of thy sins, and that before thy departure thou mayest be duly strengthened for thy journey by receiving His most Precious Body. When thou hast received It, make thy thanksgiving, meditate devoutly on the sweet words of His new commandment, and then, with eyes raised heavenwards, long with all the powers of thy soul to be united with Christ. After this, turn thy thoughts to the Passion of Christ, and draw from it the comfort with which it is so full. Go also with Jesus and His disciples into the garden near the Mount of Olives; that is to say, regardless of thy friends around thee, retire within thyself, so as to be quite alone with God; and pray to our Heavenly Father for a good end of thy earthly pilgrimage. Go down upon thy knees with Jesus, fall upon thy face, put thyself into God's hands, and use those most perfect words of Christ: "*Father, not My Will, but Thine be done*"; for He knows well, whether to live or to die is best for thy soul's health. Ask also thy brethren and all good people who come to visit thee to watch with thee in prayer that thou mayest escape the snares of the enemy. In every trial that besets thee go to Jesus, and follow Him as He bears His Cross to the Hill of Calvary. There take thy stand, choose there to end thy life, and there commend thy spirit too. Put the Passion and the Death of Jesus between thee and the judgement to come, and keep thy eyes ever fixed upon the Crucified. When

the Devil seeks to terrify thee, invoke the Name of Jesus and raise the standard of the Holy Cross. If he casts in thy teeth thy past misdeeds and thy many sins, answer him by pleading the infinite merits of Christ.

Call to mind also the seven Words of Jesus, which He spoke from the Cross for thy instruction.

As soon as He had been raised upon His Cross, He prayed for His enemies, and forgave those who were ill-treating Him; and this He did in order that thou mightest learn to forgive from the heart those who have wronged thee, before thou pleadest for thy own forgiveness.

Next, He promised to the penitent thief the joys of Paradise; and this He did in order that thou shouldst not despair by reason of the grievous burden of thy sins; but shouldst, with full trust in His mercy, ask Him to remember thee in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thirdly, He committed His most blessed Virgin Mother to the chaste John; and this He did in order that thou, in thy agony, shouldst confidently have recourse to Mary, His most gentle Mother, who is the helper of those who are in need, and shouldst earnestly commend thyself to her, and to the blessed apostle John, and to all the saints. Commend thyself also to the prayers of thy brethren, and to those of all the faithful, asking them to remember thee after thy departure in their dirges and in Masses.

Fourthly, Jesus made it plain that He was left alone in His anguish; and this He did in order that thou, when thou hast a heavy burden of pain to bear, shouldst not be impatient at not at once finding relief from it, but shouldst submit thy-

self in all things to God's Holy Will and pleasure.

Fifthly, He said "*I thirst*," in order that thou shouldst have a burning thirst after God, Who is the Fountain of living water, and shouldst long to depart, and to be with Christ; for this is far better than to prolong thy sojourn upon earth, and to be further exposed to dangers of every kind.

Sixthly, He spoke the Word "*It is finished*," in order that thou, when thou perceivest thy last hour to be at hand, shouldst render thanks to God for every good action of thy life, and shouldst pray that thy shortcomings may be supplied by the merits of Christ.

Lastly, with a loud voice He commended His soul into the Father's Hands, in order that at the hour of thy departure from the world thou too shouldst not fail to have upon thy tongue, and often to repeat, the words of that blessed commendation, than which thou canst not find anything more sweet to be remembered at the last.

O most loving Jesus, Brightness of the Father's glory, and Sun of righteousness, Who for me, Thy poor unworthy servant, didst vouchsafe to suffer this most shameful form of agony; and when delivering up Thy Soul upon the Hill of Calvary, for the redemption of the world, didst commend It in prayer to the Father, grant that I may ever feel within me both sorrow and love for Thy most cruel Death; grant that, by mortifying all my corrupt affections, I may daily exercise myself in dying with Thee; that so, when the hour of my departure shall be at hand, I may be found meet to live again in the light of Thy mercies, and joyfully to enter with Thee into the

bliss of Paradise. Stand by my deathbed, help me in my agony, come to me when I need Thee most, defend me from my enemies, deliver me from my distress; comfort me in my sorrow, strengthen me when I am dismayed, refresh me when I faint, take me to Thyself when my last sigh is breathed. May Thy last Word upon the Cross be my last word on earth; and when speech fails me, give heed to this last wish of my soul: "*Father, into Thy Hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of Truth.*"

CHAPTER XXXI

Of the wan and piteous appearance of Jesus, when on His Soul leaving His Body, evident signs of death showed themselves in Him

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, spotless Mirror of the Majesty of God, for the wan and piteous appearance, due to death's onset, which Thou didst present, when after Thy Soul had left Thy Body, evident signs of mortality showed themselves in Thee.

Alas, alas, my Jesus, fairest of men, the comeliness of Thy pleasant countenance has been marred by the filthy spitting upon Thee of men of unclean lips, and in Thy contest with death Thou hast lost the bloom of Thy beauteous manhood! Alas, my most loving God, all these things have befallen Thee because my sins had to be washed away: it was in order that my soul might be made white, that Thou didst submit Thy Body

to be made unsightly; it was to save me from death eternal, that Thou didst taste for a while the most cruel of deaths. O Death, what hast thou done? How is it that thou wast not afraid to lay thy hand upon the Lord's Anointed? What power hadst thou over Him; what crime couldst thou lay to the charge of the Son of God? Thou hast fallen upon Him, and slain Him; but thy victory has cost thee dear: for in slaying Him thou hast slain thyself; impaled upon the stake of Christ's Divinity, thou hast brought to an end thy cruel reign; and on the descent into Hell of the Soul of Christ thou hast been compelled to set free all the Saints, dead because of Adam's sin, who had so long been held captive by the prince of Darkness. As indeed the Prophet had long since foretold: "*O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy sting.*" And so in Church is raised the triumphant song: "Life dies upon the Tree: the grave has lost its sting."[1]

By Thy death, therefore, O Christ, the hope of life is mine once more, and by Thy victory over the prince of death a crown of joy is given me.

[1] [The Responsory from which these words are taken is not to be found in Office-books of the present day; but during the Middle Ages it was customary in some churches to introduce, at the end of Tenebrae, certain tropes; and it is one of such which is quoted in the text. This trope (*Kyrie eleison: qui passurus, etc.*) is known to have been in use in the Diocese of St. Gall (Switzerland) in the tenth century; and from its being found quoted here it would seem to have been in use in the Diocese of Utrecht in the fifteenth.

For the material of this note and of those at pages 204 and 259 *infra*, I am indebted to the kindness of the Right Rev. Dom Fernand Cabrol, Abbot of Farnborough, who, as the authority for this note, cites "Paleographie Musicale, Partie Monumentale," i. 225, and Pothier.]

Abundant indeed, and manifold, was the grace which flowed forth from Thee, when Thou didst die upon the Cross in order that we might live; for original sin is done away, actual sin is forgiven, pardon is extended to all, the sentence is modified, vengeance is stayed, every debt is wiped out; to no contrite soul is mercy denied; for of Thy Passion the merit is inexhaustible.

It was not for nothing that Thou didst submit to die. For what then didst Thou die? It was not an angel that needed Thy death; for the angels have never lost their first estate. The devil can never be reinstated, for his fall only hardened him. It was for man, then, that Thou didst die; and it was because death came upon him by reason of his being caught in the snares of the devil. Fitting indeed it was that Thy Charity should raise up him whom another's malice had caused to fall: but how great is the love, how immeasurable is the depth, of the counsels of God! Oh the wonder of the never-to-be-forgotten mystery—man earning salvation through the merits of the Cross, winning a kingdom through its offence; entering into glory through an exacted penalty; brought through death into life everlasting! Thy Passion, therefore, O Lord, is of all things the most sacred; it is for all wounds a sovereign remedy; Thy Cross is the downfall of all who are against us; it is the safeguard of all who trust in Thee; Thy death is the penalty by which all our faults are expiated, it is the foundation of all our virtues. I will rejoice, then, in Thy merits and in the fruits of Thy Passion, and I will ever take comfort from the thought that Thou hast redeemed me; but my love for Thee must ever make me grieve over Thy cruel death. It is love that makes me rejoice

with Thee in Thy victory over death; and it is love that makes me bewail Thy having had to bear such a heavy load of anguish for my sake.

Come then, O faithful soul, and look upon the pale and careworn features of thy crucified Saviour; mark each several limb of Jesus Who is dead, and let the greatness of thy compassion make thine eyes run down with tears. Thy time is well spent, very sacred are thy thoughts, when thou art occupied in contemplating Jesus hanging on the Cross. As a cluster of cypress in the vineyards of Engaddi, so is the thought of the Crucified in the heart of a good man. If, then, thine eye is pitiful, if thou hast in thee aught of the milk of human kindness, lift up the eyes of thy mind to meditate upon God, crucified for thee, hanging dead upon the Cross. There before thee is the Tree of the Cross, upon which hangs thy Salvation; of the devout the Redemption, of unbelievers the laughing-stock. His lifeless, thorn-crowned Head is bowed low upon His sacred Breast. The Eyes of Him from Whose all-seeing Eye no secret can be hid, are sightless now. The Ears of Him Who foreknows all things, hear nothing now. He Who gives to flowers the sweetness of their scent, smells nothing now. The sense of taste has gone from Him Who gives to all things that have life their life and food. He Who makes the dumb to speak opens His Lips no more. He Who teaches men knowledge is silent now. That Tongue which preached the truth lies useless in His Throat. That Face, which once was brighter than the Sun, is now deadly pale. Those Cheeks, which once were fair as a turtle-dove's, are fair no longer. Those Hands, by which the heavens were spread out, are pierced now with cruel nails. The

Knees, so often bent in prayer, hang now limp and powerless. The Legs, which like marble pillars used to support the Body's weight, have now lost all their strength. The Feet, which were so often weary when the gospel was being preached, are now as tightly fastened to the wood of the Cross as if they were fixed in the stocks. It can be seen that every Limb has been in agony; they are each one covered with wounds and blood. But His bones are not broken, as are the bones of the thieves: and this is in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled; for He is the true Lamb, prefigured in the Book of the Law, the bones of which were ordered to be kept unbroken. This is my Beloved, O ye daughters of Jerusalem; This is my Friend; and it is to this pass that death has brought Him, in exchange for Whose Death—so precious was He—if I could submit to a thousand deaths, I could make no due return for His love.

O most sweet Jesus, Redeemer of my soul, how can I win to die with Thee upon the Cross; how, at my departure from the body, can I obtain such happiness? Grant, I earnestly beseech Thee, that in this frail body I may so live, so order all my doings and all my affections in accordance with Thy Will, that I may be able to finish my course in a state of grace; and in spite of all the temptations which beset me, may receive at last the crown of joy eternal.

CHAPTER XXXII

Of the cruel piercing of the most sacred Side of the Lord Jesus after His death

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, exhaustless Fount of Love and Grace, for the cruel piercing after death of Thy most holy Side. So fiercely, O Thou of holy ones most Holy, was Thy right Side then struck and pierced by the lance of one of the soldiers, that the weapon, passing through Thy inward parts, entered Thy tender Heart, and from the gaping wound thus made there came forth a fountain of Blood and water, so wholesome for us, that, sprinkled therewith, all mankind may be healed.

O wondrous fountain of the Holy Blood welling from out the right Side of Christ as He hung in death upon the Cross, flowing ever onward for the Redemption of the human race! O bright and most refreshing stream of blessed water gushing forth from the Saviour's Heart for the washing away of all our sins! Under the Old Dispensation, Moses, the Servant of the Lord, smote the rock in the wilderness, and thereout came there forth so plenteous a supply of water that the people and their cattle drank thereof with joy, and no longer murmured. But the brawny soldier Longinus, when he opened Christ's right Side, struck the Rock with his lance so fierce a blow, that thereout Blood and water have never ceased to pour; and our holy Mother the Church has drawn therefrom the Sacraments, by means of which her life is preserved: for as Eve is called the mother of all

living, and was formed from her husband Adam's rib, so is the Holy Church Militant named the Mother of all the faithful, and She is the new creation from the Side of Christ, Her Spouse. O mighty and precious Wound of my Lord, worthy of love art Thou above all wounds; so deep and so wide art Thou that all the faithful may enter by Thee into the Side of Christ; miraculous art Thou in what flows from Thee; most copious in blessings; in time last formed, in glory pre-eminent. Of the Divine and holy fountain of this Wound whosoever shall drink, or of its love taste but one drop, he shall forget all his evil deeds, shall be cured of the fever of carnal and worldly desires, shall burn with love for the things which are eternal, shall be filled with the joy unspeakable of the Holy Spirit; and this Holy Fountain shall become in him a fountain of living water springing up unto everlasting life.

Go in, go in, my soul, into the right Side of thy crucified Lord! Enter through that glorious Wound into the most loving Heart of Jesus, pierced with the lance for love of thee, that so in the cleft of that Rock thou mayest take refuge from the tempest of the world! Draw near, O man, to that Heart so exalted, but made so low for thee; to the Heart of God, Who is so far above thee, but Who opens to thee His door! Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why dost thou stand without? The river of life, the way of salvation, the heavenly storehouse, shedding perfumes all around; all these lie open to thee. Here is a place of refuge from the face of the enemy who would tempt thee, here is a place in which thou mayest find mercy against the wrath of the judgement to come. Here is a fountain, whence the oil of gladness and

of grace shall never cease to flow, wherein sinners may ever find mercy, if only they will come to it with hearts truly penitent and contrite. Here is the well-spring of the river of God, going forth from the midst of Paradise to water the face of the earth, to give the thirsty soul to drink, to wash away sins, to quench the flames of lust, to still the strivings of anger. Do thou too, then, take from this Fountain of the Saviour a cup of love. Take from the Side of Jesus sweet helps for thy life, that henceforth thou mayest live not in thyself, but in Him Who was wounded for thee. Give thy heart to Him, Who has opened His to thee. Enter through the hallowed Wound into the inmost Heart of thy Redeemer. He bids thee enter; He asks thee to dwell with Him; His wish is that thou shouldst have but one heart with Him. "*My son,*" He says to thee, "*give Me thy heart.*" This is all that God asks of thee: give but this, and thou hast offered the gift than which nothing can be more acceptable to Him. Give it, then, to Jesus, and to none else besides: give it to Christ, and not to the world: give thy heart to that Wisdom which will never fail thee, not to that philosophy which is so but in name. He caused His Side to be thrown so widely open, and to be so deeply pierced, in order that the way by which thou mightest draw near to the Heart of thy Beloved should be made plain to thee; in order that thou mightest penetrate into the very Soul of the Son of God, and be made one with Him in true union of heart; that thou mightest centre all thy affections upon Him, and mightest, in singleness of heart, do all thy works to His honour and glory; that thou mightest study to please Him alone, and mightest strive with all thy mind and with all thy

strength to serve Him, and Him only. Where canst thou rest more securely, where dwell more safely, where sleep thy last sleep more sweetly, than in the Wounds of Jesus Christ, Who was crucified for thee? Where canst thou find wisdom more abundant, knowledge more profitable, than in the Heart of Christ, Who suffered for thee, from out of Whose Breast there is ever flowing for thy use a stream of living water? Where, when thy love is beginning to wax cold, can it be more powerfully rekindled? Where canst thou so readily avoid distraction? Where canst thou be kept so fully recollected, as in the Heart of Jesus, Which for love of thee was pierced with the lance? Nothing inflames, nothing draws, nothing gets to the bottom of, the heart of man so thoroughly as love for the crucified Redeemer. This thought it was which led one of the Saints[1] to exclaim: "My love was crucified." To which with all my heart I echo: "My love was wounded and pierced, that so I might find a ready entrance into His loving Heart."

Thither then make all the eager loving haste which thou canst make bold to show; kiss the holy Side of Jesus, that so Therefrom thou mayest be sprinkled with water and with Blood. Pull out thy own heart, if thou canst, and place it close to the Heart of Jesus, in order that He may keep it, and rule it, and possess it, so that other things may not get hold of it, and defile it. Open thy heart to Him; commit thyself in full trust to Him; leave to Him thy "I will" and "I won't"; let there be one heart and one mind between thee and God: that so thou mayest think and feel with Him in all things, and mayest know His

[1] [St. Ignatius, M.]

Holy Will both now and evermore. When without reserve thou shalt have made over thy heart to Jesus, for Him to keep and to dwell therein for ever, then shall great peace be thine, nor shalt thou be easily put out, or distressed by the troubles of thy daily life.

O most pure Jesus, Who dwellest in the hearts of those who love Thee, and from Whom all good desires do come; O Thou Who hangest upon the Cross before the eyes of all who meditate upon Thy Passion; O Divine treasure-house of all gifts and graces; O Christ my King, Redeemer of the faithful, Who causedst Thy most holy Side to be pierced by the point of a cruel lance; set open for me, I beseech Thee, the door of Thy mercy; suffer me to enter through the gaping Wound of Thy Side into the very recesses of Thy most loving Heart; that so my heart may be set on fire by the touch of Thine, and may be united to Thee by a bond of love so indissoluble, that Thou mayest dwell in me, and I in Thee, and that nothing may ever separate me from Thee. Pierce my heart with the arrow of Thy love, may the soldier's spear pass through my vitals, and penetrate the inmost recesses of my heart, that so, by means of this wholesome wound, my soul may attain perfect health, I may refuse all love but Thine, and out of Thee may nowhere seek for comfort. May my heart be free of access and lie open to Thee alone; may it be estranged from the world, shut to the devil, and fenced on all sides by the sign of the Cross to resist temptation of every kind.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The taking down of the Lord Jesus from the Cross

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Power of God, for Thy lowly descent, at the hour of Vespers, from the lofty Cross, upon which, for our Salvation, Thou didst hang till sunset; and whence Thou wast then ordered to be taken down, in accordance with the Jewish law, and because the Paschal Feast was about to be kept on Holy Saturday.

I praise and glorify Thee for the faithful service so lovingly rendered Thee by Thy familiar friends, what time those most just men, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, a Doctor of the Law, came with their servants to the Cross, and having set up ladders against it, mounted one on the right and another on the left, while a third was engaged in loosing Thy Feet. With due reverence and love, they drew from Thy sacred Hands and Feet three precious nails, more precious than burnished gold; and then with the help of their companions, they reverently took hold of Thy most illustrious Body, and modestly and carefully lowered It to the ground.

Blessed and full of pity were ye, who did this act of mercy to the Lord your God, in order to prepare His Body for the grave; ye were careful to show even more faithful devotion to your Friend when He was dead than ye had shown to Him when He was alive. Therefore in Heaven shall ye receive a special reward from God, to Whom

ye showed yourselves so faithful upon earth: and without doubt He for Whom ye prepared a burial place upon earth will reward your loving care by preparing for you a happy mansion in Heaven, as on the night before His Death He promised His disciples.

Oh that to me too, the least of all God's servants, might have been granted some share in the Burial of my Lord; that in the offices connected with it, some service, however small, might have been assigned to me! How willingly would I have held the ladder at the Cross's foot; or, as I stood below, have handed up the pincers for the drawing of the nails; or even lent a helping hand to those who were lowering the Sacred Corpse. What happiness would it have been if I could have stood beneath the Cross, so close to it as to have caught in my bosom one of the falling nails, which I might have kept as a Memorial of my Lord's Passion, that so, whenever I should look upon it, I might be moved to tears.

I praise and glorify Thee for that longing embrace with which Thy most sorrowful Mother received Thee into her arms, and folded Thee therein, when with compassionate devotion Thy faithful ones delivered Thee to her, and laid Thee in her Virgin lap. How copious were the tears that then streamed from those eyes, of all eyes the purest; how burning was the flood that then bedewed that face, of all faces the most modest, and fell from Thy Mother's cheeks upon Thy Corpse! How pure were the kisses with which Thy chaste Mother then covered Thy lifeless limbs; how often, and with what anguish, did she examine the prints of Thy Sacred Wounds! How loving were the arms with which she encircled and held the Blessed

Fruit of her womb, that Fruit Which she had seen sacrificed upon the Altar of the Cross for the Redemption of mankind! Who is there among the Saints who could tell forth the copiousness of those tears which the tender Mother of Jesus at that time shed, or could understand the full agony of her grief?

Draw near, then, now my soul, and devoutly kiss the blood-red Wounds of Jesus. As He hung nailed to the Cross thou couldst not come near to Him for the pressure of the crowd and the height of the Cross; but now He lies before Thee in His weeping Mother's arms, dead and covered with Wounds. Draw near, O sinner, however great thy sinfulness, however much the fear of Hell oppresses thee; for it was for thee that the Lamb was slain; it was for thee that the Victim was offered, Which has taken away the sin of all the world. So loving and merciful is the Lord Jesus, so tender and so sweet is Mary His Mother, that none can depart uncomforted, none go away empty, who with his whole heart shall have asked to be forgiven.

O how sweet are these sayings to me a sinner, sweeter are they than honey and the honeycomb to my heart; for I know that all that Jesus suffered in the flesh was suffered for me; and that from all the good which the Blessed Virgin did in her life, from all the holy service which she rendered to Christ, and from all the affliction which in this world she endured with Jesus—to me from all this come forth merit and comfort.

Keep, then, upon thy lap, O blessed Mother, thy only, thy dearly-loved Son, Who for my sake was put to death; keep Jesus from the tomb, while I, on bended knees, humbly adore Him upon earth, pour out my prayers before Him, and kiss His

Wounds, and His mangled and tortured Limbs. Hear me, O blessed Lady, be merciful to me, grant what I ask; and put before me for my kisses, Him Whom my soul loveth.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Prayers to the several parts of Christ's Body: and first to His Feet

O BEAUTEOUS Feet of my Lord Jesus Christ, Which were transfixed by one most cruel nail being driven through You both, and thereupon did shed forth much precious Blood, I reverently adore You; and I kiss You, earnestly praying that the sins which I have committed in standing or walking may be forgiven me.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Legs

O beauteous Legs, and humble Knees of my Lord Jesus Christ, Which were in prayer so often bent and prostrate upon the naked earth, Which were racked with burning fever in His Passion, I humbly adore You; and I kiss You, meekly entreating that the sins which I have so often committed by my want of fervour and devotion in the service of God may mercifully be forgiven me.

Hail Mary, etc.

* * * * * *[1]

[1] [The original adds: "*Ad ventrem.* O sacer et incontaminatus venter Domini mei Jesu Christi, quem portavit et aluit virginalis aula sanctae Mariae, qui multis verberibus fuisti acerrime percussus, adoro te dignanter et osculor

To the Side

O most adorable Side of my Lord Jesus Christ, in which the Wound of Divine Love is to be seen pierced through and through, I specially adore Thee; and I cover Thee with kisses, earnestly imploring that the sins which I have so often committed against brotherly charity, and by waxing cold in my love for God, may be forgiven me.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Back

O most patient Back of my Lord Jesus Christ, Which wast ready without a murmur to bear the Tree of Life, and the burden of the sins of all sinners, Which also submittedst to be most cruelly scourged, I devoutly adore Thee; and I reverently kiss Thee, praying that the sins which I have committed by being impatient under the burdens laid upon me may be forgiven me.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Hands

O adorable Hands of my Lord Jesus Christ, Which were stretched out to Their widest upon the Cross, and were pierced by great iron nails, I devoutly adore You; and with tears in my eyes I kiss You, and pray that all the sins which I have committed by act, or by touch, may be done away.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Breast

O most pure Breast of my Lord Jesus Christ, on Which was never spot of sin, nor could any

compatienter, supplicans mihi relaxari, quotiens corpore meo ampliorem, quam necessitas exigebat, curam impendi. Ave Maria."]

enter Therein, upon Which blessed John the Apostle leant at Supper, I adore Thee in all sincerity; and I lovingly kiss Thee, praying that whatever guilt I have contracted by foul thoughts may be thoroughly washed away.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Neck

O white and slender Neck of my Lord Jesus Christ, Which wast so often mere skin and bone from hunger and from thirst, Which wast never painstakingly adorned, nor ever proudly stretched out, or lifted up, but wast humbly bowed in filial respect; Which in the Passion wast so cruelly buffeted, I humbly adore Thee; and I lovingly kiss Thee, praying that whatever I have done from motives of vanity may be forgiven me.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Mouth

O most sweet Mouth of my Lord Jesus Christ, out of Which the word of Salvation went forth into the world, Which wast defiled by the spittle of the Jews, Which wast embittered with the draught of vinegar, I adore Thee; and I gently kiss Thee, entreating that the sins which I have so often committed in eating, drinking, and speaking may be forgiven me.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Face

O illustrious Face of my Lord Jesus Christ, full of kindliness and awe, Which wast so foully spat upon by the Jews, Which wast so shamefully buffeted, and mockingly veiled, I adore Thee with the reverence which is Thy due; and I lovingly

kiss Thee, praying Thee to pardon me all the disrespect by which I have so many times given offence to Thy Majesty.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Ears

O blessed Ears of my Lord Jesus Christ, Which no breath of flattery ever entered, Which no sneering or offensive word ever made to swerve from the path of uprightness, I honour and adore You; and I reverently kiss You, and pray that I may speedily forget every idle word which I have drunk in by listening to that which I ought not.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Eyes

O Eyes of my Lord Jesus Christ, brightly shining, never soiled by any evil desire, now dimmed by death; Eyes Whence many a time came forth a shower of tears, with all my heart I adore You; and I gently kiss You, praying the while for pardon for all the stains upon my soul caused by sight used unlawfully.

Hail Mary, etc.

To the Head

O sublime and adorable Head of my Lord Jesus Christ, having now a sharp crown of thorns pressed down upon the top of Thee, and Thy hair stained and hallowed by the Blood Which has run down upon Thee, I join the angels and all the heavenly host in adoring Thee; upon each of Thy sacred Wounds I print loving kisses; and I earnestly entreat Thee to rid me from all the thorn-pricks which my sins have left in me, and to vouchsafe to number me among Thy elect, even though my

place must needs be found among the least of all the members of Thy Body.

Hail Mary, etc.

CHAPTER XXXV

Of the adorable Burial of the Lord Jesus

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, sweet Savour of life, and Brightness of the everlasting day, I bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee, for the careful preparing with precious spices of Thy sacred Body for Its burial. This was not indeed needful for warding off corruption; but Thou didst accept it as showing the devotion of Thy friends, and as being in accordance with Jewish custom—witness the instances of like burial recorded of certain of the Patriarchs and Kings.

I praise and glorify Thee, for the loving enwrapment of Thy sacred Body in a clean linen cloth, and for the respectful binding round of Thy ever-blessed Head with a pure white napkin, which was afterwards found in the Holy Sepulchre.

I praise and glorify Thee for the removal, amid many tears, of Thy Body to the place of Its burial; for the reverence with which It was placed there; for Thy condescension in lying in the new tomb hewn out of a rock, which was provided for Thee by Joseph, a noble counsellor; where, because the hour was late, Thou wast, by Thy weeping friends, honourably buried, and wast tightly closed up therein with a heavy stone.

Rejoice and be glad, O venerable Joseph, that so pious an office was thine, and that thou wast able to do this charitable work for Christ. I

thank thee much, and heartily commend as worthy of all honour thy noble conduct throughout this matter; for not only didst thou ask of Pilate leave to bury the sacred Body, but for It thou didst open that very tomb, which thou hadst made ready for thine own future resting-place. How highly must God have thought of thee, when He, Whose dominion extends to the ends of the earth and over everything within the circuit of the Heavens, chose thy tomb above all other places in the world as the place of His Burial. Be sure, O most illustrious of men, that henceforth, so long as this world shall last, and one faithful soul shall be left in it, thou shalt ever be had in honour, both by God and by men.

For this most Holy Sepulchre shall be more noble and more glorious than all the sepulchres of Saints and Kings, and shall be celebrated throughout the world. From the uttermost parts of the earth shall pilgrims flock to visit this holy place, and to worship at the spot where the Body of their Lord was laid to rest. Here was Jesus buried, here the Crucified was laid; here did the holy women lament over Him, here were the guards set; here did Christ rise on the third day; here was Jesus seen of Mary Magdalene; here appeared from Heaven the Angel of the Lord; here were the guards struck with terror, and became as dead men.

Here then, by the Tomb, do thou, O my soul, for a while abide, so as to join the holy women in mourning over the Lord Jesus, Who for thy sake was laid in the grave. Fitting indeed is it that thou shouldst pay thy tribute of grief to Him, at Whose hands thou dost hope one day to receive the reward of joy eternal. Think how intense was

the grief of all Christ's faithful ones, and specially of the holy women, at seeing Jesus taken from them, and laid in a tomb—Christ for love of Whom they had given up all that they had, Whom they had followed hither and thither for so long, to Whom they had so often ministered of their substance, Whom they had loved so tenderly that they could scarce bring themselves to lose His sweet presence for even a short moment; with Whom they longed ever to live and to hold sweet converse, and through Whom they believed that joy everlasting would be theirs. The more intense their love, the more bitter surely will have been their grief.

But what above all rent the hearts of these sorrowing ones was the thought that the hope of their Lord's rising again seemed to be at an end; and that their faith was, so to speak, buried with Jesus in the tomb. It seemed therefore to these poor women that the only comfort left them was to weep over Him Who had been taken from them, or to make ready sweet spices; that so if they could not bring Him back to life, they might at least, by their faithful service in embalming It, preserve His Body from decay. But, O holy and devoted women, ye who love Christ with an unquenchable love, do not, I pray you, lament over much; do not give way to despair; call to mind the words which Jesus Himself spoke to you when He was in Galilee, and wait yet a while for their fulfilment; for after three days He will without doubt rise again. Then quite plainly and with great joy, shall ye again see Him, over Whose burial, with spirits utterly broken and with such sad hearts, ye are now lamenting. Then shall the hearts of all His friends, who now so

deeply mourn His death and burial, be filled with renewed joy; nor will He need this embalmment of yours, for when He rises from the dead He will appear in great glory. He will have put on immortality, and death shall no more have dominion over Him.

Learn thou too, O my soul, from the Burial of Jesus to meditate with profit upon the dissolution of thy own body. Needs must that what from the earth thou didst receive, that to the earth thou must restore: dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return. Upon what then dost thou pride thyself, thou who must soon be mere rottenness, and a thing hidden out of sight in the ground? What seest thou to yearn after in a world, out of which thou must so soon be cast, trodden under foot of men? Whenever then thou lookest upon the graves of the dead, remember that thou too wilt soon be with them. There—and thou knowest it well—there is the home appointed for every one that liveth. There, laid low together, content with a mere corner of earth, shall the rich man and the poor man share one bed. There gentleman and commoner cannot be known the one from the other, and the strong and the weak are upon the same footing. There the miser's wealth will not profit him; nor will the crafty man be helped by all his cunning. There the epicure will be food for worms, and the fop will stink in the nostrils of the passer-by. There the loftiness of men will be bowed down, and the counsel of the haughty ones will be brought to nought. Remember that nothing mortal can endure for ever, and that man, having corrupted his nature by sin, must needs go back to the slime from which he was taken.

Strive so to live in this present world, and so to mortify by the spirit the deeds of the flesh, that when thy body is mouldering in the dust thy soul may be found meet to rest in a home of blessed peace. Spend the Good Friday of this life in painfulness and toil, and thou shalt have a Holy Saturday of rest, and an Easter of joy unspeakable at the resurrection of the just. The stricter therefore thy life in this world, the calmer shall be thy sleep in the tomb; the stronger now thy hold upon the Cross, the greater shall be thy confidence when thou comest into the presence of Christ. The more bitter now thy sorrow for thy sins, the fewer of them will there be to be purged away by the avenging fire.

Bewail then, bewail now thy sins, while the day of grace is thine, while the door of mercy stands open, while God, with Whom is plenteous Redemption, is ready to accept thy penitence. Bewail also the unhappy condition of the world, and that grievous softness of men, whence it comes that so few true followers of the Crucified are to be found, and that the spiritual fervour of so many soon grows cold.

Henceforth, then, be it thy daily practice to meditate upon Christ Jesus. Him Crucified keep ever before thy eyes; stand ever beneath thy Saviour's Cross; in life and in death be with Jesus in the Tomb; that so when Christ, thy Life, shall appear, thou too mayest rise with Him in glory. Amen.

TREATISE II

PRAYERS CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS

PART I

CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, AND HIS APPEARANCES

PART I

CHAPTER I

Of the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross, His triumph over death, and His most joyful Resurrection from the grave

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, for Thy victory and triumph upon the Cross over death, and for Thy glorious and joyful Resurrection from the Tomb, in which, after being buried amid many tears, Thou didst, for our sakes, lie for three days and nights, actually a corpse, hidden from every human eye, and closed up with a great stone, so that Thou couldst neither be touched nor seen by Thy disciples or Thy friends. Thou wast, moreover, watched by a strong guard of heathen soldiers as a precaution against Thy rising from the dead, and making Thy escape; and to prevent Thy disciples from carrying Thee away, secretly taking Thee to some other place, worshipping Thee as God, and saying to the people: "The Crucified is risen from the dead."

But in this case surely the wickedness of evil men recoiled upon themselves; and all the crafti-

ness of the devil, all the might of Pilate, all the wrong-headedness of the people, all the knavery of the priests, all the wisdom of the Scribes, all the counsel of the Pharisees and of the Elders—anxious to wipe out Thy Holy Name from among men—were brought to nought. Of a truth counsel against the Lord there can be none; no earthly power can withstand the Most High; against the Wisdom of God man's cunning exalteth itself in vain; the All-knowing God cannot be deceived by tricks, no matter how crafty they may be. Thou Who didst lay the foundations of the earth, and didst set to the sea its bounds; Thou Who didst make all things in their weight, in their number, and in their extent; Thou to Whom were known the time of Thy Birth, and the hour of Thy Death; Thou knewest also the time appointed for Thy Resurrection, and its hour.

When therefore, O most merciful Lord Jesus, midnight was past, and dawn was at hand, Thou didst in a glorious Body, in an atmosphere of joy and unspeakable light, rise happily again to life from the sealed Tomb, even as at Thy Birth Thou didst come forth from the womb of Thy most holy Mother the Virgin Mary, without breaking the seal of her perpetual Virginity—a stupendous mystery, an unheard-of miracle, possible only to Thee as God, working concurrently with God the Holy Ghost.

And this is why Thou didst establish the Festival of Thy Resurrection to be for ever kept most holy, as brighter than the sun and more glorious than all the festivals of the year; and didst provide that by the faithful throughout the world it should be celebrated with joyful hearts and voices, in Hymns and Psalms, and with frequent Alleluias,

and be most conspicuously honoured by joyous remembrance and thanksgiving.

At last, then, O Christ, my King, on this night, with Angels looking on, and rejoicing with Thee in Thy glorious triumph over death, and at the confounding of Hell, Thou didst mercifully open to us men an entrance into everlasting life, even as Thou hadst foretold to Thy disciples; and while they knew nothing about it, Thou didst joyfully clothe Thyself in Thy glorious Body. Then indeed did all the Powers of Darkness groan and gnash their teeth at beholding the brightness of Thy countenance in our human nature. There was a great earthquake also, and fear fell upon the armed guard of soldiers which was on watch at the Sepulchre; and they became as dead men when they felt the earth quake and saw the wondrous vision of Angels. For the Angel of the Lord, shining in whiteness like to snow, came down from Heaven and took away the great stone from the Tomb; so making ready a direct and safe path for the holy women, who were on their way to it, bearing precious spices to anoint once more their Jesus in the Sepulchre, that so they might safely draw near, and see that the Tomb was empty, and that their Lord was not there, but had risen.

I praise and magnify Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Almighty King of Kings, Lord of Heaven and earth, Maker of all things, for Thy hard-won victory over Hell, and for the strong fetters with which Thou didst bind proud Lucifer, whom Thou didst cast into a burning lake of fire, of stinking sulphur and of pitch.

I praise and glorify Thee for the might with which Thou didst subdue the Devil's power for evil against the race of men, and didst prevent

the demons from harming us as they please, which was what they were wont to do before Thy Incarnation and Passion. By a just judgement the wicked devices of the Jews in procuring Thy Crucifixion between two thieves, which they had instigated in the hope of destroying Thee, recoiled upon their own heads.

And now behold Thou art risen; Thou hast been victorious over the Kingdom of Hell; and by the sign of the holy Cross Thou hast broken in pieces all the power of the demons. Thou hast brought down their pride, and put it under the feet of the lowliest of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen out of the world; for now all Christians, no matter what their rank may be, be they nobles or only common folk, rejoice in being signed with the sign of the Holy Cross, and bear it boldly on their foreheads in honour of Thy Name, as a defence against the fear of the old serpent, and against the scoffs of unbelieving Jews and heathens, who to this day hate the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who was crucified for the salvation of the world.

I praise and honour Thee, O most gracious Jesus, for mercifully visiting in Limbo the Saints of the Old Dispensation, and for releasing all the faithful souls which were resting in Abraham's bosom. They indeed had long time anxiously looked for Thy descent into Hell, and with eyes full of tears were lovingly exclaiming, as we do now in this day's processional: "Thou art come, O loved One, Whom we have long waited for in our darkness; Thou art this night come to bring forth from the prison house those who were bound."[1]

[1] [The words quoted are from an ancient Responsory formerly sung in many churches on Holy Saturday (cf. Thomasi Opera, edition Vezzozi, v. 86).]

Lead thou, then, the chorus of joy, O Adam, our first parent, founder, so far as man can be said so to be, of the human race; rejoice thou, together with Eve thy wife of high renown, formed from thy side in Paradise! Rejoice; for Christ, a descendant of thy own, Virgin-born, and sacrificed upon the Cross, has come to deliver thee and all thy fellow-captive descendants, who have died trusting in Him, and in the hope of heavenly grace! Christ has come to deliver thee from the power of the grave, out of the house of bondage, out of the shadow of death, out of the den of lions, from the fear of the evil demons; and to bring thee and all the Saints of whom thou wert the progenitor, attended by the angels who were your dear companions when on earth, amid songs of sweet rejoicing, into a Paradise of delight and of everlasting bliss.

Do thou too rejoice, O holy patriarch Abraham, father of many nations; rejoice thou with Sara, thy faithful wife, over the Incarnation of Christ, foretold to thee, and crowned with this Festival! This is the day which thou hast long expected, and wished to see. Firmly didst thou believe and therefore hast thou been found worthy to be made glad by beholding with thine own eyes Christ, born of thy seed, the Giver of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Do thou too rejoice, most ancient father Isaac, at the bright vision of Christ, and at His descent into Hell, concerning which, before thy death, thou didst prophecy; and when blessing thy son Jacob, didst in mysterious words beautifully point to Christ as of holy ones the most blessed, and didst speak His praises in these words: "*Behold the smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field, which the Lord hath blessed. Cursed be he*

that curseth thee; and let him that blesseth thee be filled with blessings!"

Wherefore I too, on hearing and reading these things, give thanks to Thee, my God, and above the names of all the Saints, bless Thy sweet Name, O most sweet Jesus Christ, hoping that I may be found meet to be numbered by Thee among Thy chosen ones, to be filled with heavenly blessings, and to come at last to that Kingdom of joy in which the holy Angels dwell with Thee for ever.

Do thou too rejoice over this day, O mighty wrestler Jacob, chiefly for the heavenly glory and the benign glance of Jesus Christ, concerning which in days long past thou didst, when blessing thy sons, prophetically speak in these words of faith and prayer: "*I will look for Thy salvation, O Lord!*" O word truly sweet to the ear, and full of joy to the godly! O wholesome word, which in its inner meaning speaks of Jesus, long desired by Patriarchs and Prophets, patiently expected, and now at length shown forth before their eyes; for there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved, except this most sweet name of Jesus, which is blessed for ever above all things, from everlasting to everlasting! Yes, in very truth, Jesus Himself, the Salvation of God promised in the law, Who was born of a Virgin, Who suffered on the Cross, has risen again on the third day, and has fulfilled all things which the holy Patriarchs and all the Prophets had spoken concerning Him. Speak then now quite plainly, O holy Jacob, in the joy of thy heart; say of Christ appearing in the glory of His Father in the sight of the angels of God: "*I have seen my Lord face to face, and my soul has been saved!*" What wouldst thou have more than this; and what

greater happiness couldst thou desire? If on seeing one of God's angels, thy joy was so great, what ought now thy joy to be when thou hast been found worthy to behold the Lord of Angels? If, when it was said to thee: "*Joseph, thy son, is living, and he is ruler in all the land of Egypt,*" thy spirit revived, how much greater now must be thy joy at Christ's rising from the grave, never any more to die, but to reign for ever over all who dwell in Heaven and in earth?

O all ye holy Patriarchs and Prophets, O ye kings and rulers of the people, O young men and old, O virgins and faithful widows, O Priests and Levites, O Doctors and Scribes, O ye spirits and souls of the just, O ye holy and humble men of heart, rejoice ye all this day and be glad in Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has become our Salvation! Praise Him and magnify Him for ever; for He has Himself come to visit you, and to bring joy to the hearts of all who were waiting for the redemption of His people Israel!

And now, O most loving Lord Jesus Christ, true Refuge of my soul, in Whom now is, and throughout this uncertain life from youth to old age has been, all my trust, forsake me not, I pray Thee, poor and feeble as I am, in the trials and temptations which in so many ways beset me! Strengthen me, O my God, in every distress of my heart, through the merits of Thy most Holy Passion, and through the cruel sorrows and the abundant tears which were shed by Thy most blessed Mother, in her bitter grief as she stood beneath Thy Cross, and beheld Thy Wounds! Make me glad also, I pray Thee, on account of the merits of all Thy Saints who are so dear to Thee, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and all the other

Saints who are already in bliss with Thee in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Remember, O Lord, those Holy Words of Thine: "*Many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven!*"—O Lord, Who on this day didst rise in Thy glorious Body from the Tomb, and hast steadfastly promised to all who love Thee the bliss of everlasting life with the Angels in Heaven, grant, I beseech Thee, that I may be admitted into that holy company, and may be allowed to sit at Thy heavenly Table—Who livest, etc.

CHAPTER II

Of the devout visitation of the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Comforter of all who are sad and sorrowful, I bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee, for the pious visit to Thy Sepulchre of the holy women who came there early in the morning as soon as the sun was up, that they might make certain of what had been done there on that most holy night, blessed above all other holy nights.

I praise and heartily commend the pious zeal of those holy women, those noble ladies, who sought once more to anoint Thy most sacred Body, for hasting to rise so early, while it was yet dark; and for going in a body, with all possible privacy and decorum, to Thy Sepulchre, bearing the spices which they had prepared for anointing Thee. How great must have been their sorrow of heart, what floods of tears must they have shed, as they passed

the Hill of Calvary, and beheld Thy Cross, as they contemplated the scene of Thy Passion, as they thought of all Thy Wounds! How great must have been the anxiety which oppressed them, and brought tears again to their eyes, when they caught sight of the Tomb and said one to another: "*Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre?*" What wonder if they wept; for they must have felt sure that of themselves they could not move so heavy a stone. Fear would have made them retrace their steps, but love urged them on, and bade them not be alarmed at the guard of soldiers.—"Oh, had but Peter and John been here," they will have said, "we might have depended on their ready help."—The stone was indeed very great, so heavy that ten strong men could scarce have moved it. But, holy women, it was better that the Apostles should stay at home unnoticed, and pray for you that God would protect you and fulfil all your desire, than that they should court danger by coming with you, and perhaps be killed by the soldiers. It would have added to your grief, and made your burden all the heavier to bear, if besides our Lord, His disciples had also been put to death.

What then will ye do, and whither go? Stop, I pray you, awhile and pray; fear not, but go bravely on your way; trust in the Lord that help may soon be sent you from above, and that good news may be brought you by an Angel, who knows what has come to pass as regards your Lord, laid yesterday in the Tomb. God knows your hearts, who ye are, and whence ye come: He knows Whom ye seek, what ye are carrying in your hands, and what ye are hiding under your mantles; for from the spices which you bear a sweet smell

is going up before God into the Courts of Heaven, and the holy Angels are rejoicing in the sweetness of your holy prayers, and in that burning love ye have for Jesus, and are now showing forth in the work ye are doing for Him. Of a truth love knows no obstacles; it fears no one. Love presses ever onwards till it is in sight of the loved one. Make haste, then, go forward in silence, mark carefully the Tomb, and if it should be open, go boldly into it. If ye shrink from going in, bide awhile and pray, raise your eyes to Heaven, and besiege its gate, with your moans and tears, till the Angel of the Lord shall descend from Heaven, and shall say to you: "*Fear ye not; for I know that ye seek Jesus Who was crucified; come and see the place where the Lord was laid. He is not here, as ye may see, He is risen, as He foretold you.*" If ye have remembered well His words, ye ought to have no doubt about His resurrection. It was love for Jesus which drew you out of the world; it was love for Jesus which has now led you to His Tomb. It was love for Jesus which made you mourn at His Passion; it is love for Jesus which will make you rejoice at His Resurrection. Wait but a little while and you shall see Him, and doubt shall be no longer possible. Look not for Him any more as lying in the grave; but seek Him as living with the Angels in Heaven: no more at the table of Martha in Bethany, but as sitting at the Right Hand of the Father in His Glory; no more as sailing in a small ship with Peter, but as reigning over all the choirs of Angels; no more as preaching on a mountain side, but as ruling over every creature in Heaven and on earth. Remember how He told you beforehand that the Son of Man must be crucified, and rise again the third day.

Depart now therefore consoled and comforted by the Angel. Go quickly and take the good news to the Lord's friends, tell the glad tidings to His mourning disciples; bid them not despair because they all forsook Jesus and fled. Bid them hope for pardon; specially tell Peter, who thrice denied his Lord, and has since never ceased to weep bitterly, that he should not be fearful, but should trust to the great and never-failing love of Jesus, of which he has had so many proofs; tell him that this very day he shall see his Lord, and shall be full of joy. Tell him all the things which ye have seen and heard; for in very truth our Lord Jesus Christ has this night risen again.

O holy Peter, cease now to weep; rise up quickly and come, run with holy John, go boldly into the Tomb, and see lying there the linen clothes and the napkin of Jesus. Believe the word of the Angels, who say that Jesus is risen and is alive, and will go into Galilee, and will show Himself to His disciples. Be glad and rejoice with Christ, O holy Peter, chief shepherd of the Church, for He has risen again, Who is the Good Shepherd, Who vouchsafed to die upon the Cross for thee, and for the sheep of His flock. O sweet answer from the mouth of the Angel, so full of comfort for the hearts of those who mourn; so full of hope of pardon for poor sinners, from the example of blessed Peter, and of many other Saints, who after having fallen rose up again stronger than before. Blessed be God, Who never turns away His Face from those who are troubled in heart, but saves those who are of a humble spirit, and makes strong in faith those who look only to Him, and desire no other Comforter.

O holy women, ye who have heard all this good

news concerning Jesus; should He meet you in the way and say to you, "Hail, my sisters!" clasp His Feet, and let Him not go till He has blessed you! Fall low upon your knees, adore Him, and greet Him with friendly words of peace, and that not for yourselves only, but for me too, a sinner humbly asking to be forgiven. Oh that the grace of shedding tears and of showing devotion such as yours when He appeared to you, might also be mine! I am full of hope that He will readily grant your prayers for me, because of the holiness of your merits, and of your diligence in the services which you have so often rendered to Him.

I praise and honour Thee, O most gracious Jesus, for Thy exceeding gentleness, and for the loving and comforting words with which Thou didst greet the holy women when they met Thee in the way, allowing them to clasp Thy most sacred Feet—those Feet Which were nailed to the Cross, Which are brighter than the sun, whiter than snow, lovelier than a carbuncle, more precious than gold, sweeter smelling than any balm or chrism.

O Almighty Lord Jesus, I give Thee most hearty thanks for sending from Heaven Thy holy Angel to roll away the great stone from the Sepulchre; to drive away the heathen guard from that holy place where Thou didst safely rest, as a strong lion in his den; to prepare for the men and for the women who loved Thee free access to Thy Tomb; to comfort those who were bewailing Thee as dead and buried; to confirm and strengthen the halting faith of those who were doubting Thy Resurrection; and to rejoice with Thee at Thy happy return from Thy descent into Hell, and at

the setting open of the gate of Heaven. Grief at Thy Crucifixion had taken such full possession of the hearts of those holy women, that they had quite given up hoping for Thy Resurrection, in spite of Thy having so often foretold it. Nowhere could they have found comfort, had they not visited Thy Sepulchre that morning; had they not heard from the mouth of the Angel that in very truth Thou hadst risen; had they not in confirmation of the truth seen Thee with their own eyes, and clasped with their own hands Thy glorious Feet. But when all these things had been done, Thou didst add to the comfort Thou hadst given them by Thy loving greeting of them, and by laying upon them a joyful duty—a duty worthy of all acceptation and honour—lovingly consoling and encouraging them with the words: "*Fear not; go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see Me.*"

How delightful are those words to the ear, how sweet are they to the mind, how profitable are they for meditation, and for taking the place of gossip about the things of this world! How bright must have been the eyes that had seen the Lord, how pure the hands that had touched Jesus, how holy the lips that had printed on Him a kiss. How swift in walking and how quick in running must have been made the feet; how prompt in obedience must have been made the hearts; how joyful must have been made the lips of those who were bidden to tell the disciples that the Lord was risen. Great as was that Good Friday burden of sorrows when the ignominious Cross of Jesus was seen upon the Hill of Calvary, out of all proportion greater far must have been the joys of that first Easter Day, when the glorious tidings

of His Resurrection were made known. The reproach of the Jews is turned into the exceeding great joy of the Apostles; the offence of the Cross has become the means of everlasting salvation; the tears of the Saints have given place to the songs of Angels; and the wounds made by the scourging and the nails have won for us the remission of our sins.

O most sweet Jesus Christ, kindle also in my heart, I pray Thee, the love of Thy Holy Name, more precious than that of all the Saints in Heaven and in earth; that so, with Mary Magdalene and her companions, I may remember it every morning at the break of day, and may seek Thee in the sepulchre of my heart; may be utterly dead to the things of this world, and may cling devoutly to Thee in the silence and the solitude of prayer. Keep my heart from being hard, my body from being slothful, my eyes from being drowsy. Give me the grace of true contrition, fill me with the joy of true devotion, that so I may worthily celebrate, at this sacred Feast, the glory of Thy Holy Name. Receive, at the hands of the holy Angels, who full of reverence and awe keep guard over Thy Sepulchre, the first-fruits of my lips as a sacrifice of never-ending praise; and may those same Angels faithfully defend me by day and by night from every danger, whether of body or of soul.

And be Thou, O Lord, ever at my side, and chiefly at the hour of prayer, that wandering eyes and vain fancies may not lead me astray during the Divine Office, and cause me to forget Thee in Thy holy Place. Of a truth it is there especially that I ought, as a prayerful suppliant, caught up to Heaven, and forgetful for Thy sake

of the things of earth—it is there especially that, as far as may be, made one in a pure heart with Thee, I ought with the utmost awe and recollectedness to approach Thy glorious Presence. For what are the things of this world but vanity of vanities? Truly, as compared with the joys of Heaven, earthly gladness is in Thy sight a thing of nought. Therefore, O my God, Thou Who art the Crown and the Glory of the Angelic host, grant, I beseech Thee, that I may ponder the words of the psalms, and of the other hymns and canticles, as they are said or sung in Church, and may take in their meaning, so far as in my human frailty I am able to grasp and understand it: and so be Thou with me till it is given me to stand before Thee, Who art the true Light, Who wilt then make light all that now within me is dark, and wilt make glad with perfect joy all the citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Receive, I pray Thee, at my hands on the holy day of this great festival, in place of sweet-smelling ointment made of myrrh and frankincense, the many and bitter inward groanings of my heart for all my sins and negligences of thought, of word and of deed; that so as a new man, born again of the Spirit, clothed in white, and humbly confessing my sins, I may be found meet to appear with joy and gladness among Thy Saints. Hereupon, then, I offer to Thee, instead of costly spices confected of balsam and honey, all the loving desires of my heart and all the pious exercises of all Religious in praise of the Holy Trinity, and in honour of Thy joyful Resurrection, in union with the song of angels and the rejoicing of all the Saints who stand before Thee in Heaven. Amen.

A Prayer to the holy Angels, who watch over us in our life on earth

O holy Angels and Archangels, ministers of the Heavenly King, ye who are clothed in white raiment, ye who are fulfilled with those good gifts which last for ever, take pity, I pray you, upon me a poor weak sinner; and obtain for me, both now and always, God's help in my pilgrimage and exile upon earth; succour and defend one who is poor and destitute; and to one who is weak bring power to withstand the wiles of the devil and his own sinful lusts. Put upon me white robes, build me up in holy ways, in faith, and in hope and in the love of God; strengthen me in the inward man that I may grow in grace, weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and giving thanks always for all good works done anywhere for the honour of God; that so God, Who is all in all, may be blessed, praised and exalted for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER III

Of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene in the form of a gardener

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, to Whom all hearts are open, and from Whom no secrets are hid, for Thy kindly appearance to Thy ardent lover Mary Magdalene, as she stood weeping by Thy Tomb, what time Thou didst vouchsafe to show Thyself to her in the form of a gardener, to reveal to her, of Thy special grace, many secret things of Thy Godhead and mysteries of Thy Manhood,

making known to her first of all Thy creatures the certainty of Thy glorious Resurrection, and in place of her tearful lamentings and many questionings, bestowing upon her abundant joy and gladness.

I praise and magnify Thee for Thy loving appearance, and for the gentle words which Thou didst speak, to the disconsolate Mary Magdalene, when Thou didst question her and say: "*Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?*"

O good Jesus, O most sweet Master, Who knowest all things before they come to pass, why dost Thou ask of her that which Thou knowest full well? Thou knowest that what she is seeking and longing for is that which indeed beyond all else she loves, Thyself alone. It is because in the Tomb she found Thee not, because she has lost that which in all the world was most precious to her, that she weeps, and is sad. As often as she thinks of Thee, as often as she hears Thee spoken of, as often as she sees Thy Tomb, or calls to mind Thy Cross, or anything else that has had to do with Thee, that moment her heart sinks within her, and she weeps; for love knows no rest till it finds what it has been seeking, possesses what it loves, and holds fast what it has been longing for.

Be not angry then, O Lord, if even on so high a festival as this holy Easter Day, she sheds tears in Thy presence. It is her love for Thee; it is her great devotion to Thee, which has given her no sleep nor rest, which has driven her from her couch before the break of day that she might come and anoint Thee—it is these things which have made her as Thou seest. It is because she has not found Thee that she weeps, and that her grief on Thy account is so intense. With so great love does she burn, with such intense longing is she on fire,

that had she but an Angel's wings she would fly to Thee over mountains and hills and above the stars of heaven. Higher than the Cherubim and the Seraphim in Heaven would she mount in search of Thee, if only she might find Thee in Thy Kingdom, if only she might see Thee sitting on Thy Throne at the Right Hand of the Father. But to-day this happy lot may not be hers; nor indeed to all is it given to be caught up with Paul into the third Heaven, but only to those for whom it is prepared by Thy Father, and at the proper time, that namely which has been foreordained of God.

O loving Jesus, Comforter of those who mourn, have pity on Mary in her grief, come to the help of her who mourns, speak to her who loves Thee. Speak but one word, and her sorrow will have an end. Tell her but Thy name, let but Thy voice sound in her ears, and straightway her grief will be assuaged. Show her the Light of Thy Countenance, most beauteous Lord Jesus, and most sweetly will her soul rejoice in Thee. Call her by her name, and on the instant her tears will cease to flow.

Why, I ask, O Lord, why hidest Thou Thy Face from her who loves Thee, from her who seeks Thee so anxiously, from her who laments Thee so bitterly? When in very deed Thou art her beloved Lord, and her Master, her Lord in Thy authority over her, her Master in teaching her, why dost Thou pretend to be other than Thou art, why dost Thou feign to be the gardener? Say to her, then, I pray Thee: "I am Jesus Whom thou seekest; be still and weep no more; go in peace!"

Nay, good Jesus, what is Thy purpose in all this, why dost Thou not satisfy the longing of her soul? I know that Thou doest and orderest all things well. I know that Thou neither deceivest

nor canst be deceived; for Thou art a just God, loving and true in all Thy ways. Surely it was in order that Thou mightest stir up yet more her longing after Thee, in order that Thou mightest make trial of the strength of her patience, and in order that by affliction and delay Thou mightest purify her soul, and mightest after long-protracted grief and many tears lead her to yet greater joy. Surely it was for all this that Thou didst hide from sorrowing Mary the brightness of Thy Countenance, and didst keep her from knowing Thee.

And in all this, surely, Thou didst intend the example of holy Mary's patience and repentance to be to all Thy faithful servants in distress a source of great comfort. Mary was very dear to Thee, and she was adorned with many excellent gifts, but for all that she was in this life often in trouble and distress, often heavy-laden, often forsaken for a season. But this was in order that her merits might become greater, and that other Christians might profit by her example: never was she altogether forsaken, never forgotten.

How wisely, O Lord, and how tenderly, dost Thou deal with Thy loved ones, whether Thou sendest them trials, or givest them consolation—both of which Thou dost in order to lead them to Thyself, and to the everlasting rest of the heavenly Paradise. They must needs be tried by manifold temptations, and be purified like gold in the fire of tribulation: and if they would be made fit for the Kingdom of God, and worthy of the beatific vision, they must take everything that comes from Thy Hand as a priceless boon, and as a pledge of that everlasting life which Thou hast promised to every faithful soul that does not cease to weep and to pray, as did Mary Magdalene on this day before Thee.

How good art Thou, O God of Israel, to those who are of a right spirit, to those who seek Thee humbly and truly, with sorrow and with tears, as Mary sought Thee and found Thee. The more laboriously a thing has been sought after, the greater the difficulty in finding it, the more will it be cherished, the more carefully will it be guarded. The longer a man has gone without food the more will he relish it: a bitter draught makes any water taste sweet. We love daylight because night has gone before it; it is when we have been cold that we most love a fire. Joyous music gives us the greatest pleasure when sadness has gone before it: hard work gives us the most refreshing rest and sleep. The fiercer the war, the more welcome is peace. Stars are at their brightest when a misty sky becomes clear; birds sing their merriest as the sun rises. Even so, when Christ with His peace is at hand the soul which has been in trouble is renewed like the eagle. All this is well seen in the case of the beloved Mary Magdalene, who having wept much was abundantly comforted of the Lord. "*O how great is Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.*"

"*Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself,*" as saith Isaias, and besides Thee there is none other like Thee, knowing how to order all things so wisely for Thy loved ones. O good Jesus, eternal Wisdom of the Father, in what humility and in what love didst Thou live Thy life among men, teaching them what was wholesome and profitable for them; to despise earthly things, to love heavenly things, and to endure adversity!

How sweet was Mary's discourse with Jesus, the Saviour of the world, the King of Angels, the Lord of lords, the Prince of the citizens of Heaven,

the Ruler of the ages. Of a truth, Lord, had Mary known Thee fully, she would never have thought Thee to be the gardener; she would never have addressed Thee as a stranger, asking what Thou wert doing there, or of what Thou wert in search. "*Sir,*" she said, "*if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me.*" O Mary, how canst thou so speak to Him, the greatness of Whose power Thou knowest not. Whence dost thou take courage to say boldly: "*I will take Him away.*" How canst thou venture to think that of thyself thou canst lift such and so great a man? Tell me whither dost thou wish to take Him? Who gave thee leave to take away that which thou hadst not put there? Thou knowest not what thou sayest. Call thy companions and see whether, as thou sayest, ye could, all of you together, carry Him Whom ye seek. Ye will scarce be able, for ye are tired with your long walk, and weak from your two days' fast, and with weeping for Christ, Whose sacred Body ye cannot find. O Mary, if the others have gone away, and thou art alone, what wilt thou do? Ask that Gardener to help thee in thy search for Him Who is so dear to thee, and in carrying Him Whom thou lovest, and art seeking with so many sighs and tears. No one can help thee better, or comfort thee more fully than that Gardener; no one, if He would only say so, knows better than He whither thy Lord has been taken, or where He is hidden. I suspect that it was pity for thee that brought Him to thee, in order that He might Himself tell thee where He Whom thou seekest is to be found, and Who it was that during the night removed Him from the Tomb.

How intense was the longing of this holy woman, who never stopped searching and weeping! Speak,

Lord, I pray Thee, but one short word to her, so that Thy dove on hearing Thy Voice, may know Thee, and for joy at finding her Spouse may raise her voice in song and dry her tears. Thou art He Whom she is seeking: Thou art He Whom she longs for; Angels, creatures, and human comfort of what kind soever, satisfy her not. Speak, Lord, and how willingly will Thy handmaid, Thy faithful attendant, hear Thee. Say to her, as Thou wert often wont to say to Thy beloved hostess: "Mary!" That is her name; and so she would rather be called by Thee than by any one else, for Thou art her only Hope. More she does not want; Thou art her all in all.

O Mary, know Jesus, by Whom thou art known; love Him Who first loved thee. Make answer, loved one, to thy beloved Master, to the Gardener after thine own heart: "Rabboni, my Lord, I thank Thee for appearing to me. Now I possess what I sought, now I behold Him Whom I bewailed, and better far is my lot than I could ever have hoped it would be."

How happy was the day, how blessed was the hour in which, O Mary, after Angels had been seen by thee and had spoken to thee, thou wast found worthy to behold the Lord of Angels, and to hear His sweet voice saying to thee: "*Go to My brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father, and to your Father, to My God and your God.*"

Mary therefore did as Jesus had commanded her, and full of joy, went forthwith, without a moment's delay, without a murmur, to tell the disciples the good news that after her prolonged sorrow and her many tears, she had seen her Lord.

How pleasing and acceptable were those tears

coming from a heart that was pure, from a love that was fervent, sweeter surely far than the precious spices in their alabaster box got ready for the anointing.

And now, O most merciful Christ Jesus, Who didst vouchsafe to visit and to comfort holy Mary Magdalene when she was overwhelmed with sorrow and distress, I entreat Thee by the bowels of Thy mercy, that when my soul is weary and sad; or is heavy laden by reason of some bodily trouble, or of sorrow of heart, due either to my having given way to temptation, or to the unnoticed withdrawal from me of the sweetness of Thy grace, or to some fault which I have committed, better known to Thee than to myself; or when an evil conscience oppresses me with the thought of judgement to come, and fills me with alarm on account of my daily negligences and coldness of heart, in respect of many duties left undone, or made worthless by being mixed up with idle vanities —when any of these things come upon me, show to me also, I beseech Thee, mercy like to that which Thou showedst to holy Mary Magdalene. Withdraw not, I pray Thee, O Lord, Thy Hand from me when I am in trouble; and suffer me not to doubt of the pardon of my sins. Of Thy unspeakable bounty, take me, I pray Thee, to the Bosom of Thy mercies; for they endure from everlasting to everlasting upon all such as with their whole heart seek Thee, and desire to love Thee. Of Thy wonted lovingkindness extend to me once more the grace of Thy holy comfort, for which I long with my whole heart; and moved by the prayers and by the tears of holy Magdalene, show to me when my soul departs from my body, the saving joy of the light of Thy Countenance. Amen.

CHAPTER IV

Of the great merits, and privileges of grace, of blessed Mary Magdalene[1]

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, heavenly Physician, Who for the Salvation of our souls, didst come into this world to redeem sinners, and to draw them with the cords of Thy love, by the path of repentance, to Thy heavenly Kingdom. Thou Who didst vouchsafe to be born of Mary, the Virgin, didst think no scorn of being touched, of being washed, of being wiped, of being anointed, and of being kissed by Mary, a sinner, when she wept and repented. O loving Jesus, Son of the living God, merciful Saviour of mankind, Thou didst in this life mercifully bestow great privileges of grace upon most blessed Mary Magdalene: when she had turned her back upon the vain things of the world, and had been converted to Thee, Thou didst graciously accept her penitence; Thou didst fully pardon all her sins; and while she bewailed them with tears, Thou didst freely remit their punishment. Thou didst breathe into her heart that great contrition which she felt; Thou didst save her from losing hope of forgiveness

[1] [Saint Mary Magdalene was much venerated at the Agnetenberg monastery. The altar in its first chapel (consecrated 23 June, 1395) was dedicated to Saint Agnes and most Blessed Mary Magdalene; and one of the four other altars, subsequently consecrated (12 April, 1412) when the church was finished, was dedicated to most Blessed Mary Magdalene, Saint Catherine, Saint Cecilia, and the eleven thousand Holy Virgins (*i.e.*, Saint Ursula and her Companions).]

by filling her sorrowing heart with the comfort of Thy grace. Thou didst set her soul on fire with Thy Holy Spirit, and didst inwardly refresh it with the sweetness of Thy love. Thou didst bid her go in peace in full trust in Thy mercy; Thou didst warn her against going back to her former way of life, and didst bid her be steadfast in all manner of holy conversation, and in fervent prayer. Not one harsh word didst Thou ever speak to her, never didst Thou taunt her with her sin, never didst Thou tell any one what she had done; nay, rather Thou didst make excuses for her, and didst put forward her good deeds as an example of holy life. When Thou wast the guest of Simon the leper, Thou didst take more pleasure in Mary's tears than in all the dainty food set before Thee by the Pharisee. Thou didst not shrink from her touch; nor didst Thou spurn her when she anointed Thee. Thou didst put forward Thy Feet, and didst bow down Thy Head for her; Thou didst not disdain her kisses. With Thy Lips Thou didst bless her, with Thy Hand Thou didst sanctify her; by Thy touch Thou didst cleanse her, by a few short words Thou didst make her whole, saying to her: "*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*" O what sweet words are these! They come from the mouth of God; they are full of grace and mercy; they are ever to be gratefully remembered.

Thou didst accept the hospitality of Mary and Martha as that of friends dear to Thee; Thou didst lodge and take Thy rest in their house, and they ever made Thee welcome. There didst Thou eat and drink whatever was set before Thee and Thy disciples, though it was only such as was fit for poor and needy men who had but little money in their common purse: in that house there was

no disorder, no noise, no silly jesting, no loud laughter, no unprofitable talk to be heard. Humble as Thou hadst made Thyself, yet as Master, in demeanour sober and decorous, Thou didst preside at table; having made Thyself poor, Thou didst share the meals of poor folk: Thou wast their Refection-Reader and Theologian; and instead of wine Thou didst set before the friends who were so dear to Thee the words of Eternal Life. Martha, busy as she was with household affairs, Thou didst discreetly instruct; and for Mary who took less part in such things, but sat peacefully at Thy Feet, drinking in the words which fell from Thy Lips, Thou didst make loving excuse. When her sister complained of being left alone to serve, Thou didst praise Mary's higher life of contemplation: and when the traitor Judas found fault about the ointment which she had poured out upon Thee, Thou didst declare her free from blame. She modestly held her peace; but Thou at once madest answer on her behalf, reciting her good deed, and being silent as to what she had done wrong. When Mary wept over her brother Lazarus lying dead in his tomb, Thou didst weep with her, and Thou didst so join his friends in their grief that many of them said: "*Behold how He loved him!*" Of what good report must that Lazarus have been, and how pure must have been his life, for Jesus to have loved him when he was alive, to have raised him when he was dead, to have supped with him after he was restored to life!

O loving Jesus, Who art both the Author and the Rewarder of every good deed, Thou didst not forget the faithful service so often done to Thee in the house of Mary and Martha; small kind-

nesses Thou didst repay by great; for good deeds done to Thee in the body Thou didst return spiritual blessings; things earthly Thou didst reward with things eternal. What shall I say more? Words cannot express, the mind cannot realize, all Thy good gifts to men, all the miracles and signs wrought by Thee in Galilee, in Nazareth, in Bethany, in Jerusalem, in Judaea, and throughout the Holy Land, before the eyes of Thy disciples and of all men, in witness of the truth; that so by reason of all Thy divine and wondrous words and deeds they might believe that Thou art indeed the Christ, the Son of God, Who camest into the world to be the Saviour of mankind. How highly exalted in Heaven art Thou, Who upon earth wert so lowly! How humble and how loving wert Thou amongst men when Thou didst heal them: how stern, and how terrible wert Thou to the demons when Thou didst cast them out! How full of mercy wert Thou to the penitent, how strict wert Thou with evil-doers, how compassionate wert Thou to the afflicted, how kind to those in want, how consoling to those who were in grief! Where among men can be found a friend so faithful, where so powerful a helper in every time of need as Thou, our God? How great was the joy which Thou didst give to those sisters when Thou criedst with a loud voice: "*Lazarus, come forth!*" And presently he that had been dead came forth, obedient to the word spoken by Thee, the Lord of life and death. And then Thou saidst to Thy disciples, as having in Thy stead the cure of souls: "*Loose him and let him go.*"

O my Lord, vouchsafe, I pray Thee, to loose me also from the chains of all my sins, that so I may meet death without fear, may come to Thee

with joy, may join the holy Angels and Mary and Martha in praising Thee for ever, and may never more fall into sin. Amen.

CHAPTER V

Of holy Mary Magdalene's great sorrow of heart at the Passion of the Lord

ALL praise and glory be to Thee, O most sweet Jesus Christ, for the exceeding holiness of Mary Magdalene, and for her devout lamentation at Thy most sacred and most bitter Passion. For her it was not enough to have attended Thee in Thy life on earth, and to have followed Thee through towns and villages witnessing the signs and miracles, worthy of all praise and honour, which Thou didst work by Thy Divine power; but in Thy Passion she never left Thee, but followed Thee weeping to the Cross's foot, and was with holy Mary Thy Mother, and the many other devout and holy women, who with bitter tears compassionated Thee as Thou wentest on Thy way to Calvary, sorrowing for the burden of the Cross which Thou hadst to bear, and for the cruel death to which, all-innocent as Thou wert, Thou hadst been condemned. So long therefore as Thou wert in sight, she followed Thy Cross weeping, sobbing, and lamenting; she marked Thy every step, and passed along wringing her hands, beating her breast, and wiping her eyes, while copious floods of tears poured down her cheeks; for she felt that in no better way could she show her love, no otherwise could she be of any use, than

by showing the deepest sorrow of heart, by weeping bitterly all day and all night, and by never forgetting the pain and the anguish which Thou hadst to endure. She felt every Wound of Thine as if it had been her own, and the more she loved Thee the more vehement was her grief, the more copious were her tears. When she saw Thee stripped naked and nailed to the Cross, she stood with Thy Mother at its foot, as close to it as she dared; and in spite of the intense anguish of her grief, for nothing in the world would she leave Thy Cross; to Thee and to Thy Mother she clung most faithfully until Thy death. When she heard Thy loud cry, and saw Thee die upon the Cross, so overwhelmed was she with grief that her soul fainted within her. Nourishment she could not take; sleep forsook her eyes. Tears were her only meat; to live longer deprived of Thee seemed to her a lot too hard to bear. Had she not been in all things submissive to Thy Will, she could after Thy death have endured life no longer. Her constant lamentations show that without Thee this life had no joy for her.

But, Mary, for the sake of thy loved One as He hangs upon the Cross, refrain thyself this once, I pray thee, for a while, and support the Mother of Jesus and her sisters in their hour of grievous need. Think not of forsaking the Mother; think not of leaving the side of the most sorrowful Virgin Mother of Jesus, as if thou couldst no longer bear to look upon grief so intense, or to hear moans so piteous. Grieve with those who grieve, weep with those that weep, that so in the glory of the Resurrection thou mayest rejoice with them that rejoice.

O good and most loving Jesus, Mary did as

Thou hadst bidden her. As Thou saidst to her, and commandedst her before Thy Death, she kept what was left of the ointment in order that she might therewith anoint Thy Body for Its burial. She did not sell it, as Judas would have had her, for she did not forget Thy words; but she kept it in the alabaster box, and bought yet more of it, so making preparation for Thy needs. Of a truth a friend is proved in distress; true love is shown in the action which it prompts. And so it was that this holy and most faithful Mary proved how she loved Thee in life by the depth of her grief, and by the loving care for Thee which she showed in all that she did for Thee after death in the matter of Thy burial. Not a single thing did she leave undone of all that was needed for the reverent burial of Thy sacred Body. She swathed It, she anointed It, she covered It up, she bound It round, she sewed up the linen cloths, she reverently placed upon Thy sacred Head a napkin as Its fitting covering. All the while that she was doing this she wept unceasingly: her only comfort was the thought that she was found meet to join Thy other followers in attending upon Thee and upon Thy Mother, and that she was able to see all things about Thee rightly done. When at length Thy most sacred Body had been laid in the Tomb, and the entrance to it had been firmly closed and sealed, there was a fresh outburst of grief and lamentation; for she thought that never again in this life would she see Thee, with Whom she had but a short while since enjoyed such fellowship of spiritual life and joy. Nor, even when the Tomb had been closed, could she at once leave the place where her earthly Treasure lay hid: till sundown she sat there mourning in

company with many other faithful women, till at length tears failed them; and even then they poured forth from the recesses of their hearts sighs of love, even as it is written of them: "The women sitting over against the Tomb wept and sorrowed for the Lord."[1]

Oh that to me also it might be given in such wise to compassionate Thee, O my Lord Jesus Christ, when I meditate on Thy Passion, as did devout Mary Magdalene on that Good Friday when she saw Thee crucified, dead, and buried, and of all men, as it were, set at nought, mocked, and blasphemed. But, thanks be to Thee, O most patient Jesus, this untrue report concerning Thee was but short-lived; for after three days Thou didst conquer, and didst confound Thy enemies by rising again victorious over death. Of a truth, Lord, those words of Thine were fulfilled which Thou spakest beforehand concerning Mary Magdalene, in the presence of Thy disciples, in praise of her good deeds, saying: "*Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her.*" Of a truth Thy whole house is filled with the odour of the ointment; that is to say the whole Church of the faithful, spread abroad throughout the world, is instructed by the teaching of the Apostles, and is animated by Divine truth. For the renown of Mary's great sanctity is set forth in the writings of apostles and evangelists, and is consequently proclaimed far and wide by Doctors and preachers; and year by year her glorious festival is celebrated and honoured in Holy Church with special devotion

[1] [These words form the Antiphon at the Benedictus on Holy Saturday.]

by all the Clergy and by the people of either sex, upon the day on which her most blessed soul passed from this world to dwell with Thee, our Lord Jesus Christ, in Thy everlasting tabernacles. Amen.

CHAPTER VI

Of the joyful and loving appearance of Christ to His Mother when she had withdrawn to her secret chamber

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son of God, Incarnate and Born for our Salvation of Mary the Virgin, for Thy glorious and most true Resurrection, made as on this day, and chiefly for that most joyful and secret appearance which Thou didst vouchsafe to make to Thy holy Mother Mary, as she was praying in the secret chamber of her house, and with intense longing and firm faith was looking for Thy coming. To her first of all, before appearing to any of Thy holy friends, or to any of the holy women who ministered to Thee and were so beloved by Thee, didst Thou graciously appear. Thou didst reverently greet her; Thou didst most sweetly console and comfort her, and Thou didst abundantly rejoice her heart by Thy bodily presence clad in the shining and glorious robe of Thy immortality.

From what we know of Thy tender love it is right and just that we should think that this was so, and that we should believe it for the honour of Thy most Holy Mother; for Thou art loving and full of mercy in all Thy works, and Thou didst command us to honour our parents, and to comfort mourners.

This then is to be piously believed by all the faithful, that before any one else Thou didst first of all visit Thy most holy Mother, who was sorrowing deeply at Thy Passion; and by Thy presence didst dispel all her grief and sorrow, and didst fill her heart with joy.

And although she did not go with the other devout women to visit Thy Sepulchre, it was not from want of love, nor from fear, nor from excessive grief that she failed in this duty; but it was because she knew for certain that Thou wouldst rise again. She stayed at home in the sure hope that on the third day Thou wouldst come to her; and so, engaged meanwhile in holy prayers, she longingly awaited Thy coming. She deserved therefore to be the first to see Thee, Whom she loved and longed for more than all the world besides, in Whom she believed with a faith which knew no doubt at all. For if, because she believed the Angel Gabriel's message, when he announced to her the sacred mystery of the Incarnation, Mary was called blessed, and was so highly commended, how supremely blessed and to be commended was she for believing in Thee, her Son, Flesh of her flesh, in all Thy works; and for wavering not one whit, but standing firm when others were doubting.

How unspeakable was the joy with which holy Mary, Thy Mother, was filled in that hour when she saw Thee, her Son, adorned with dazzling splendour, and in a Body more glorious than the brightness of the sun, and exceeding in beauty all the stars of Heaven. How intensely and how heartily did her spirit rejoice in Thee, O Jesus, her Lord and her Salvation, on that day above every other day of her life in this world. How eagerly did she gaze at Thy glorious Body, that

Body which a short while ago she had wept at seeing cruelly scourged and nailed to the Cross, which she had seen pierced in Its right side by Longinus' lance, and had afterwards laid in the Sepulchre as a Corpse. Deservedly, then, is Mary, whose heart at Thy Passion was rent with a keener grief than those of others, whose tears had been more copious than those of others, and whose grief had moved many others to weep with her—deservedly then is Mary to-day made happy above her wont by seeing Thee in glory; deservedly is she filled with new comfort. This, O Lord, was the moment when Thou didst bring to pass that word of Thine, which at the Supper Thou didst speak for the comfort of Thy Apostles (and didst assuredly make known to Thy afflicted Mother), saying: "*I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you, and will see you again; and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.*"

Thou hast indeed done well, O most kind Jesus, in visiting as a Son Thy dearly loved Mother, in greeting her reverently, in speaking to her sweetly, in comforting her heartily, in showing to her the joy of Thy countenance, in driving away from her all sadness, and in wiping away all tears of sorrow from her eyes. For no sooner had she seen Thee than all sorrow and sighing fled away, and when Thou spakest to her heart, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, abode more intimately with her than even with the Apostles, making, so to say, her soul drunk with joy. Thou Who formerly, at her request, didst at the Marriage Feast turn water into the best wine, now on Thy return from Hell, and by Thy victory over Thy enemies, didst with yet greater power, and by a greater miracle,

change death into life, the cross into glory, Thy Mother's tears into gladness, and Thy disciples' fear into everlasting joy.

Thou didst not send an Angel, nor even an Archangel; not Michael, nor Gabriel, nor Raphael, Thy glorious messengers; nor any noble earthly knights, gorgeous to behold, clad in gold and silver and in precious stones, to wait upon our dear Lady, Thy Mother, the Queen of Heaven; but, Thou, O King of Glory, Jesus Christ, Thou camest Thyself in person, early in the morning before the break of day, unseen of men, without a messenger to announce Thee, to visit Thy most blessed Mother, as she knelt instant in prayer, and awaited full of faith Thy return in Thy glorious Body from the Tomb. For she knew that all things must be fulfilled even as Thou hadst Thyself foretold, and as the holy prophets had long ago spoken of Thy Passion and Thy Resurrection. Of a truth this is the day which Thou hast made a Day of Gladness; a day rightly and deservedly to be esteemed more holy, more illustrious, more celebrated and more joyful than all other days in the year.

With all Thy holy ones in Heaven, and with all Thy devout and faithful ones upon earth, I praise and honour Thee for the sweet converse and the secret conference, which Thou hadst with Thy holy and dearly loved Mother Mary in her chamber, into which no noise of the world could come; where Thou didst discuss with her Divine mysteries concerning the Kingdom of God, the joys of Paradise, the choirs of Angels, and the holy souls redeemed from Hell and given a share in the joys of Paradise along with Enoch and Elias.

Oh that I had been there, and had heard Thy sweet words; that I had secretly stood near the window, and had listened attentively, unseen by the eye of man, to every word which fell from the lips of my Lord Jesus Christ as He talked with His Mother about the joys of the citizens of heaven. With what intense gladness would my heart have rejoiced in the Lord, could I, for my comfort in my earthly pilgrimage, so full of dangers as it is, have remembered even one or two words of that sacred converse! But perchance what passed was what man may not utter, which ought to be kept secret, which ought to be meditated on in the joyous music of the heart alone. Blessed is he who knows that music, who by meditation rises above all earthly things, who is busy all day with Jesus and Mary, and neither cares, nor thinks, about what is going on in the world.

It seems to me that no mortal man was worthy of being present at this converse, but only the holy Angels, and the souls of the just who follow their Lord with reverence and with joy whithersoever He goes. Perchance too that conference was so exalted and so heavenly, and that visit to the Mother's humble dwelling was so surpassingly sweet, that neither were the Apostles allowed at that time to enter it, nor could they have taken in the wondrous mysteries which Jesus, glorified of the Father, then discussed with His Mother, blessed Mary full of grace. Rather therefore, O Lord Jesus, would I leave all those things to Thee and to Thy holy Angels, humbly asking forgiveness of all my sins and shortcomings from Thee, Who makest known to babes Thy hidden treasures, and feedest starvelings with the bread of Heaven.

O most gracious Lord Jesus Christ, Who after Thy bitter Passion and joyful Resurrection didst appear calm and joyous, in all the brightness of Thy glorified Body, to Thy most holy Mother Mary, and in place of her trouble and distress didst fill her heart with new and unspeakable gladness, have mercy, I pray Thee, upon me, Thy poor weak suppliant, who am so often sorely troubled in my earthly pilgrimage.

Lo, I fall low before Thee this day; full of affection I keep on knocking at the door of Thy loving Mother, and I pray that in the time of my affliction Thou wouldst vouchsafe to come into the secret place of my heart, to console and comfort me, and to preserve me, on the one hand from undue sadness, and on the other from unbecoming joyousness.

Kindle in my heart, I beseech Thee, and keep alive in it renewed fervour and greater devotion and thankfulness to Thee, that so I may learn to turn my back upon all the vanities of this world, to seek the things which are above, to choose like Mary the things which are eternal, to meditate on the things of God, and to rejoice in Thee alone. Oh that to me, poor and of no account as I am, it might be given to ponder these things more earnestly than ever before, and to tarry longer with Jesus my Lord; that so the whole world and those who love it may become distasteful to me, and I may be able to shut them out of my sight.

O most sweet Jesus, mayest Thou, together with Thy most sweet Mother Mary, and Thy holy Angels, be more pleasing and delightful to me than all else besides; kindle, I pray Thee, in my inmost heart the fire of Thy love; come oftener to visit me, and bless me more and more abund-

antly; keep me devoted to Thee; and when the trials and troubles of this life are over, bring me safely to that heavenly Kingdom, where Thou livest and reignest, etc.

CHAPTER VII

Of the appearance of Christ to St. Peter in secret; and of St. Peter's running with St. John to the Sepulchre

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Chief Shepherd of Holy Church, and faithful High Priest to God for us, for the surpassing love and unspeakable mercy which in so many different ways Thou didst manifest to Thy most blessed Apostle Peter; for the Divine words which Thou spakest to him; and for the secret visions, which Thou didst so often show forth to him. Thou didst choose him rather than any of the other Apostles to be the Prince and Shepherd of the souls of the faithful; Thou didst make him their head; and after Thy departure from this world to Thy heavenly Father, Thou didst leave him as Thy Vicar, and keeper of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

O Fountain of mercies, and inexhaustible Source, whence heavenly gifts flow down upon penitents, and upon those who weep over sins committed; O most loving Bestower of pardon, and Giver of heavenly grace; O Lord Jesus Christ, Who to all Thy Saints, and to Thy friends whom Thou didst choose before the foundation of the world, art sweet and beloved; O Thou Who never ceasest to bless, and to shed Thy favours upon,

those who run after Thee, who are truly contrite, and who humbly ask forgiveness; O most gracious Lord, in spite of his thrice-repeated denial of Thee Thou didst not withdraw from Peter Thy love, but straightway by Thy gracious look Thou didst bring back to himself, and cause him to weep bitterly; Thou didst mercifully and fully pardon all his sin against Thee; and in spite of his grievous fall, Thou didst restore him to his former rank and to his pontifical dignity.

I praise and highly exalt Thee for that surpassing love of Thine which caused Thee to appear this day, in some secret place better known to Thee than to me, to holy Peter, Thy much-loved Apostle, for his special comfort, at that time so greatly needed by him; for he who had most offended most needed help and comfort; and no better Comforter, no more powerful Guardian of the soul can be than Thou art, O Jesus, our Maker and Redeemer.

I render thanks, therefore, to Thee, most gracious Lord Jesus Christ, Who art both the Judge and the Restorer of the fallen and the distressed, for having given timely help to Thy straying sheep Peter, and for having thus kept him from giving way to excessive grief and despair of forgiveness, and from doubting of Thy Resurrection because he did not find Thy sacred Body in the Tomb.

As a loving and discreet Physician of afflicted souls, Thou didst send Thy holy angel to comfort Peter, and to give him hope of pardon: and so it was that Thy Angel, speaking kindly to the women, bade them take the news to Peter. "*Go quickly,*" he said to them, "*and tell His disciples and Peter that Jesus is risen.*"

O good, O holy Angel, how well and how fitly didst thou specially call Peter by his accustomed name, the name first given him by the Lord on calling him to be an Apostle; so doing doubtless that he might not despair because of his thrice-repeated denial of his dear Lord and Master! On hearing himself so named by the Angel, and finding himself greeted as a friend by the holy women, Peter took courage, and with confidence renewed, and his trouble and sorrow forgotten, ran quickly with John to the place of burial. On seeing that all things had been so done by the Lord even as had been reported by the women and the holy Angel—who did not lie, but as a true witness and faithful messenger had pronounced the accomplishment of the Resurrection—his spirit at once revived within him, and a sure hope of everlasting salvation sprang up again in him.

Wondering, therefore, greatly in himself, and rejoicing in the Lord, Peter longed much to see his Lord, and wished that He would show Himself to him also, even as He had appeared first to Mary Magdalene. "Let her be the first among the women, but may I be the second or the third among the men, or even the last among the Apostles and His disciples! Nay, let Him do what seemeth Him right; be it unto me according to His good pleasure, so only that it be for the Salvation of my soul! I long for a sight of my Lord; I long to be comforted by His Own words, and to be perfectly reconciled to Him. Let Thy mercies come unto me, O Lord, that I may live, and may never more trust in my own strength! Remember, I pray Thee, all Thy former loving-kindness and that holy prayer of Thine

which Thou didst pray to the Father for me, and that prayer which Thou didst pray upon the Cross for sinners. Come, O good Jesus; tarry not: Thou art my only hope, to Thee alone do I look for the salvation of my soul! Show Thyself to me: if I can but see Thee I shall be safe, and shall rejoice and be glad on this holy Easter Day!"

It was done as he had said; for Jesus granted the devout prayer of His beloved Apostle Peter. Jesus in His love was presently by the side of Peter who had sought Him, and had run quickly after Him. He took the weeping penitent back into His favour, graciously blotting out the sin against his Lord into which he had been led by fear on that sad night; and bidding him be more prudent, He kindled in Peter's heart strength of will to confess His Holy Name, and to love Him with a never-ending love.

O inexhaustible love of Christ, worthy of praise from every creature, full of heavenly sweetness, worthy of being proclaimed by all the faithful throughout the world, to the end that no sinner should ever despair of pardon, and that no one who has been made whole should ever rashly presume on the grace given him from above!

How great was the miracle of mercy shown forth on this day by the Lord upon holy Peter! Angels glory in it, Archangels rejoice at it, the lost breathe again, the sluggish are roused, all faithful people with one mouth praise God for the exceeding mercy of the Lord, and for His forgiveness of most blessed Peter, whose faith in Christ could thereafter never be shaken.

How loving and how friendly was the discourse which Jesus at that time had with Peter after He

had given him the kiss of peace; and how full of peace and joy was Peter's heart as he beheld and talked with the risen Christ, his most loving Lord!

O beloved Saint Peter, venerated Apostle and elect patron of the Holy Roman Church, forget not, I pray thee, this day, and that great Eastertide when thou wast reconciled to thy Lord, and wast absolved from all thy sins by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And remember now, I pray thee, before the Throne of our gracious Jesus, me, a poor unworthy sinner, in the time of my trouble and distress; and when the hours of my weary pilgrimage on earth are numbered, and I am about to quit this body, lend me, I pray thee, thy faithful help, and bring me safe to Heaven. For the merits' sake of the Death and Passion of Christ, admit me, I pray thee, to Paradise, an entrance to which has been promised to all penitents even to the end of time. Keep me from the snares of the old enemy, deliver thy suppliant from the pains and the darkness of Hell; for God has given to thee all the Kingdoms of the world and the Keys of Heaven, that thou mayest open the gate of life to those who knock, if when the end came they were truly penitent, and turned to God in full assurance of faith. Graciously hear me, O most blessed Peter, loving shepherd of the Church, and glorious Prince of the whole world, and pray for me that I may have grace worthily to bewail my sins, and that I may obtain forgiveness from Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII

A prayer for obtaining from God the grace of tears

TURN, O my soul, to the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, in weeping and in mourning, and pray for the remission of all thy sins, and for forgiveness of thy neglect of the opportunities of doing good which God has given thee from the first day and hour of thy life up to the present moment; for with humble prayer, contrition of heart, tears and sighs for our daily shortcomings, and with intercession for all who are troubled, tempted, or heavy laden, God is well-pleased. It is a holy and a pious duty to pray to God for oneself and for one's neighbours; for in this world there is no one without sin, no one who is not in danger. True peace and everlasting rest are to be found in Heaven alone; in our pilgrimage on earth we all have sorrow and trouble; in Hell the fire is never quenched, and its pains are never-ending. To Thee, then, O Lord my God, do I and will I pray from my heart, with my mouth, and by my work, for all the sins which I have committed, whether by doing those things which I ought not to have done, or by leaving undone those things which I ought to have done. Accept my sorrow, which I offer to Thee with full purpose and desire of amendment; I resign myself and all that I have into Thy Hands, praying only for Thy grace, and that Thou wilt forgive me all the sins which I have committed in the course of this my pilgrimage, for the merits, and through the intercession, of Thy

most holy Mother Mary and of all Thy Saints, who in this vale of tears, very often shed for themselves, and of their charity for others, tears which were fruitful and profitable. Oh that it might be given to me to follow the example of those Saints, in avoiding idle talk and worldly gossip, and the taking part in foolish and silly chatter.

Jesus prayed upon a mountain, watched all night, wept often, never laughed frivolously, never spoke a light word. When He was accused before the Governor He held His peace; when He spoke He spoke modestly; when He made answer even to ungodly men He made it gently.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, also prayed very often; she wept most bitterly at the Passion of her Son; she sorrowed most grievously, and endured most meekly; when she was out of doors she was modest, and when she was at home she was not restless. In the streets she was circumspect, in the house she was not noisy. She visited her holy kinswoman Elizabeth; and having greeted that humble and pious lady, she offered gifts to her, made obeisance to her, blessed her, and bade her farewell. Having finished her errand of mercy, she returned after the birth of John with all speed to Nazareth. When Jesus was preaching the gospel to the multitudes Mary listened attentively, heard the word with joy, was quick in understanding it, kept it fixed in her mind, meditated on it frequently, uttered it sweetly, and gave thanks to God in all things worthily.

Mary Magdalene also wept bitterly in contrition for her sins, sweetly in thankfulness for benefits received, copiously as compassionating Christ's anguish, eagerly when pondering the joys of Heaven.

Holy Peter also wept, sorrowing deeply when-

ever, on hearing the cock crow thrice in the night, he called to mind his denial of his Master in days past. That frailty of his lips, into which he had unawares fallen, was the cause to him of a life-long sorrow for his fault, and of a mighty sympathy with the sorrows of his brethren. O the blessedness of those tears which so speedily washed away all the stains of that offence!

Saint Paul also wept bitterly over the error of his early days, in persecuting Holy Church, and over the sins of others, and the falling away from the faith of the Judaizers and the incontinent. He longed to bring all men to the true faith and to repent of their sins: he longed to inspire them with earnestness in a holy life and conversation, and in following to the end the example of Christ.

Saint John the Apostle also wept bitterly at the Passion of Christ: he stood all the while at the foot of the Cross, comforting and supporting Mary the Mother of Jesus. He wept also over the going astray of many, and over the waxing cold of the love of others: he wept too over a certain youth led astray by the pleasures of the table, but won back and reformed through much shedding of tears.

Our holy father Augustine also wept much over his evil-doings in the world, even as he himself humbly confesses in his writings, thus teaching all those who have turned to God that past sins, though pardoned in confession, should be sorrowfully recalled to mind, by way of stimulating humility, and in order that by this means we may with God's help be kept from again committing them, and may daily mourn, weep and pray over them. The same holy and devout

father wept copiously when the hymns, psalms, and canticles were being sung in church; and the quicker he was able to turn away his thoughts from things earthly, the brighter burnt the flame of his love for things heavenly. It was his habit to mourn over the troubles of others, to rejoice with them when all was well with them, to cheer the afflicted with the honey of charity, and to succour the needy.

There are also many other examples of holy men and devout women who have won special grace from God by the shedding of holy tears.

CHAPTER IX

Of the profit and grace of holy tears

HOLY and devout tears give mastery over fleshly lusts, quench the flames of anger, purge away the vice of gluttony, mortify proud looks, curb idle talk, make retirement pleasing, and silence a delight; they make prayer fruitful. They drive away idleness, that bane of the soul; they put an end to lying, to jesting, and to idle laughter. They make us think of the hour of death, of the dreadfulness of judgement, and of the pains of Hell. They shorten purgatory; they add to merits; they break the snares of the devil; they overcome the din of the world; they lead the man who sheds them to the Kingdom of Heaven. They blot out the evil we have done; they make good our shortcomings. They teach us to shun dangers, to remain in our cells, to read our books, to write well, to pray often. They keep the penitent in a state of grace,

they rejoice the holy soul with the thought of everlasting joy.

Oh that I could constantly experience this grace of tears, could cherish it more carefully; and that when it has been lost I could win it back by penitence, and could thus make it speedily my own!

He who would possess and hold fast this gift must be strict in the examination of his conscience, must heartily thank God for all His benefits, and must be profoundly humble. A hard and sorrowful task is this, but eminently fruitful to him who accomplishes it, and a source of joy to a dying man at the last. Blessed, then, are they who in this life often mourn in true contrition; for in the life to come they shall be comforted, and shall rejoice for ever with the holy Angels.

CHAPTER X

Of the tears of Jesus over Lazarus

O GRACIOUS and holy Tears of my Lord Jesus Christ, so lovingly and so copiously shed at the death and raising to life of Lazarus, out of sympathy with Mary and Martha and their friends, and with the Jews who were weeping with them, come, I pray You, to my aid when my heart is dry, and break down the stubbornness of my will: do this, I pray You, especially when in prayer and meditation I ought, in true penitence, to weep over my sins, and so get rid of all their filth, whether those stains upon my soul have been contracted openly or secretly, and are of thought,

or word, or deed! By day and by night, both morning and evening, do I bewail them, O Lord, as often as I call to mind my evil-doings and all the benefits which in Thy mercy Thou hast showered upon me and upon all mankind. Amen.

Of the Tears of Jesus over Jerusalem

O sacred and loving Tears of my Lord Jesus Christ so compassionately shed from streaming eyes at the thought of the overthrow and destruction of the faithless city of Jerusalem! The dwellers therein, by reason of their unbelief, could take no profit from You, but to me and to all faithful and devout souls Ye are very pleasing and very dear.

Slow of heart, therefore, and wretched man though I be, I pray You to fall abundantly upon me, and to wash away from the face of my soul the filth with which all the many sins of my whole life have defiled it; that so, being made inwardly pure, I may be found meet to join the company of the holy Angels in Heaven, there with them to behold the Father's beauteous Face. When this sad life is over, may I, through the intercession of all the Saints, find mercy before my just Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ; and at the general resurrection of the dead may I, for the infinite merits of His Sacred Death and Passion, be found worthy of a place among the blest, in the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

Of the tears of the Blessed Virgin Mary as she stood at the Cross's foot

O loving, O holy, and most sorrowful tears which, on the first Good Friday, when she beheld

the most bitter Cross and Passion of Christ, the blessed and undefiled Mary, ever Virgin, shed by reason of her inward fellow-suffering with her Son, how often did ye run down over her cheeks and breast to the skirts of her clothing; how often did ye plentifully moisten the veil which covered her sacred head, and falling upon her sacred feet bedew the dust of the earth. Oh that in following our Lady's footsteps I might secretly gather with my hand into a small vessel the hot tears which fell from her sacred eyes, and might wash with them not only my feet, which I have so often soiled by giving way to evil thoughts and wrong desires, but also my hands and my head, that is my evil words and actions, and so might obtain remission of all the sins which day by day I commit.

O loving Mother of God, Mary ever Virgin, be gracious to me, and by thy bitter laments and devout prayers blot out all my sins! O dearest Mary, come in my last hour to the help of my soul; come with the host of angels and of saints to defend me from fear of the enemy and from the pains of hell! Remember the precious Blood which thy beloved Son shed, and the Death which, all innocent as He was, He suffered for me, a sinner: remember His Side pierced with the lance; remember all the tears which thou didst shed throughout thy whole life; have pity on me when I am in my last agony, and lift up my heart to thee; for in thy merits and in the prayers of the saints do I place my trust, O clement, O loving, O most sweet Virgin Mary, Mother of God! Amen.

Of the washing of the soul by the many tears of blessed Mary Magdalene and other Saints

As often as I think of the Tears of Christ, and call to mind the weeping and the mourning of the saints, I cannot help being secretly displeased with myself and feeling utterly put to shame in the sight of God: I feel that I deserve to be beaten with many stripes, and to be overwhelmed with reproaches; I stand aghast at myself, for I am full of sores and I mourn not, I am smitten and I grieve not, I am mangy and I groan not, I am filthy and I wash not, I am poisoned and I seek no antidote; I am weak and feeble, but I seek not the timely help of the Physician of my soul.

Woe is me that the words and the deeds of Jesus move me not so quickly to tears as do the foolish tales of men to laughter. I sin daily, and in almost every moment of my life I go wrong in one way or another, and leave undone what I ought to have done, and yet I wear a cheerful countenance.

Woe is me that I do not fall with Mary Magdalene at Jesus' feet, and do not weep for sorrow of heart, that so with her I may win forgiveness. O Mary, remember me now, and lovingly plead for me to Jesus so long as I live in this frail body, and in so many ways offend.

Woe is me that, whether I am in choir or in my cell, I weep not with Peter when I hear the cock crow, or the birds warning me by their song to rise at once from my bed and pray for pardon of all the sins and negligences of which I have been guilty by day and by night.

Woe is me that with blessed Paul I do not con-

tinually mourn and weep for all the evil which, whether wilfully or thoughtlessly, I have committed, for which I ought always to be sorry, to be mourning and praying; bearing patiently and lovingly the while all the trials and burdens laid upon me.

Woe is me that I neither have, nor can attain to, the purity of Saint John the Apostle; and yet do not grieve so much for my own vileness as he mourned and wept over the sins of others.

O holy John, beloved Apostle of Christ, and most faithful guardian[1] of blessed Mary ever Virgin, humbly and with a contrite heart I beseech you to stand by my side in this my weary life on earth; and even as at the foot of the Cross thou didst support the blessed Virgin Mother in her grief and tears, so to support me in the perilous hour of death; that the cruel enemy may not get the better of me in the fight, and that I may be strong in the faith, and may put my trust not in myself but in the Passion of Christ, and in the merits and prayers of the saints. In that hour of my greatest need grant me the support of thy faithful prayers, and above all of those holy and very bitter tears, which during the Passion of Christ thou didst so plenteously shed, out of sympathy with the tears and mournful sighs of the Mother of Jesus, the wailing of Mary Magdalene, and the heartrending lamentations of thy fellow-disciples and of the holy women; for those tears of thine were not shed in God's sight to no purpose, but were in truth most profitable to me and to the whole world; nay, to this day they profit me, and teach me to weep and to mourn with thee, and daily to call to mind the Passion of my

[1] [The word used here is *custos.*]

Lord Jesus Christ, to grieve for my sins, and to pray without ceasing.

O loving Jesus, would that I could gather up all Thy Tears, and the tears of Thy Mother Mary, those of blessed Mary Magdalene, that most faithful bewailer of Thy Passion, those of all the saints whether men or women, and those of all Thy faithful servants whether men or women, into one large and strong vessel; would that I could heat it with the fire of the Holy Spirit; would that I could throw into and bathe in it my soul, and by weeping and mourning earnestly, could wash away the stains of all my sins, whether of my past or of my daily life; would that I could therein, as if in the waters of Baptism, or in those of Jordan's stream, cleanse, purify and make white my soul, and be born again, be renewed, and be created afresh; that so, washed and made pure by the prayers and tears of the saints from all my sins and offences, I might be found worthy in this life present to find grace and mercy with Thee, and at my death to join Thy Saints in glory everlasting. I ask this for Thy Sake, O Lord Jesus Christ, Who with the Father, etc. Amen.

CHAPTER XI

Of the appearance of Christ, in the form of a Stranger, to the two disciples going to Emmaus

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Who art our Saviour and our Redeemer, for Thy gracious appearance in the form of a Stranger

to Thy two disciples as they journeyed; what time Thou didst take upon Thyself the semblance of an unknown wayfarer, in order that Thou mightest bring back to the heavenly Jerusalem Thy erring sheep, and by visiting them in Thy love mightest fully instruct them.

How friendly was the manner in which Thou didst join them on the road, as they were mourning over Thy Passion, and were conversing not about wars or the petty affairs of this life, but about Thy good deeds, Thy holy words, and Thy miracles. In spite of this, however, they could not but be very sad until the truth was made known to them, because as yet they doubted of Thy Resurrection, and were not convinced about the vision of angels and what had been told them by their companions.

And who could better teach them, or better put an end to their doubts, than Thou, O Jesus, their good Master, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Who didst manifest Thyself to them, and gavest them in the breaking of bread a token by which they knew Thee well? And so it came to pass; for shortly after Thou hadst joined them, and hadst gone a little way with them, Thou didst ask them, as if Thou hadst been an unknown stranger, what was the reason of the great sadness which oppressed them, saying: "*What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad?*"

I praise Thee, therefore, and magnify Thy Holy Name for the friendliness of Thy converse with those two disciples as they journeyed. Sad at heart and perplexed were they about Thy Passion and Thy condemnation to death: but Thou didst comfort them, and didst perfectly instruct them by

proofs and warrants of Holy Scripture, in the Law and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning Thee.

I praise Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O most gracious Lord Jesus, for Thy handling, expounding, and making clear and plain those passages of Holy Writ which before were obscure, involved with various metaphors, and understood by few. I bless Thee, O Crown of the Saints, most Holy Lord Jesus Christ, Teacher of teachers, and Master of all Laws and Decrees, for opening in the days of old the mouths of the prophets, and for now Thyself vouchsafing to reveal the hidden things of the Scriptures to babes and to men who were unlearned, that so Thou mightest lead them to believe in Thee, in all Thy words, and in all Thy doings. How joyous must have been their countenances as they heard Thee speaking to them, with what love must their cold hearts have been inflamed as Thou didst unfold to them the meaning of the Word of God; for among law-givers and interpreters of mysteries there was never one like Thee! How light to them didst Thou make each hour, how pleasant didst Thou make to them the whole day until eventide, when Thou wentest in with them, and they set food before Thee! How anxious were they that Thou shouldst stop with them, desiring to listen to Thee all night, and to learn more and more from Thee!

And why? Because never upon earth did man discourse so excellently as did that stranger. No prophet, no king, no Priest, no Levite, no son or disciple of the prophets, who worked miracles, or taught the hidden things of God; no saint; not even all the Angelic Choir, can compare with Thee, O Stranger, as a Teacher. "We pray Thee,

therefore, O Lord, to abide with us. It is towards evening, and the day is far spent; it is too late for Thee to go farther; speak yet awhile with us; gladly would we hear more from Thee; we are not tired or drowsy; we long to do as Thou biddest us; for Thy words are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; more precious are they than gold and silver, and nothing that man can wish for is to be compared with them."

Would that I had been there, and could have walked unseen by Jesus' side, or could have followed behind, so as carefully to have noted all the words of my Lord Jesus Christ, to have lovingly treasured in my heart what I heard, so as to have been able to meditate often thereupon to my great profit, and to be put thereby upon my guard against idle talk with men whose company is bad for me.

But, O Lord, what actually in the body is denied me, that I beseech Thee to grant me spiritually to attain, be it in my cell, or be it in the refectory; be it when I am at leisure, or when I am at my work; whether I am alone or in the company of others; namely to have always before my eyes as being truly present with me, seeing all that I do, walking with me in the way, and inspiring me with many good thoughts, Thee, Who livest, etc. Amen.

CHAPTER XII

Of the recognition of Christ in the breaking of bread

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Bread of Life, sweet Guest of the soul, and Giver of heavenly grace, for Thy wondrous condescension in accepting as a friend the hospitality of Thy two disciples. With loving words and entreaties they prayed Thee to enter the house, with their hands they constrained Thee; without Thee they would not enter the house or sit down to meat. Thou, therefore, O loving and gentle Lord, moved by their earnest entreaties didst go in to sup with them, and to speak to them delightful words about the food for souls prepared by the angels in our heavenly home. Not as yet fully known to them, Thou didst sit at table with them, and as Thou wast wont, Thou didst take bread from the table into Thy sacred Hands, and raising Thy right Hand Thou didst bless it with Thy sacred Lips, even as Thou hadst been wont to bless it before the eyes of Thy disciples when they sat at table with Thee. Then, after having first broken off a part which Thou didst Thyself eat, Thou didst stretch forth Thy Hand and offer it to them as to friends beloved of Thee; and forthwith their eyes were opened, and they recognized Thy Divine power in the breaking of the hard bread, without the use of knife or other instrument, and in its exquisite flavour, when, renewing their gladness, Thou didst hand it to them as a token of friendship and of a wonder wrought for

them. How joyous must have been that meal at which bread was eaten which had been blessed by the Lord's own Hand! How blest were the eyes which recognized the Lord in the breaking of the bread which had been blessed by the Mouth of God!

But alas how brief was the duration of that happy moment, of that blessed meal! *And He vanished out of their sight.* Oh the change of the Right Hand of the Most High God—here a little, there a little! In nothing upon earth is there long stay; only with the Saints in Heaven is lasting and true joy to be found.

"Whither then goest Thou, O Lord; why dost Thou so soon leave those men?"

"Marvel not: take it not amiss: I know what I have done; I know what I am about to do. Other sheep I have to visit, to comfort, and to confirm in the faith. They wait for Me, and long greatly to see Me. To them therefore I go, in order that they may see Me, and may rejoice, and may no more doubt My words. I must show to them My Wounds, in order that when they have seen those evident signs they may firmly believe in Me, may pay no further heed to the reasonings of men, and may no more gainsay My power. Nothing is impossible with Me; the very elements obey My Will."

I praise and magnify Thee, most sweet Jesus, for all Thy doings, for all Thy blessed Words, and for Thy appearances to Thy disciples scattered in various places. Thou wouldst not leave as orphans those who were mourning and bewailing Thee. With a love which knew no bounds they ever longed to behold Thy Face, to speak with Thee, to walk with Thee, to be in the ship

with Thee, to lodge with Thee, to eat and drink with Thee, to be with Thee in vigil and in prayer, in sleeping and in uprising, and in promptly obeying every command that fell from Thy Lips. When Thou wentest through the cornfields on the sabbath-days they followed Thee cheerfully barefoot, and because they were fasting and compelled by hunger, they plucked a few of the ears of corn, as the Law permitted. Good is it for me to think over and diligently to mark these things, to my own grief and shame, but to Thy praise and honour, O good Jesus, and to that of Thy disciples. When they were hot and tired by reason of a long journey Thou didst bid them, as St. Mark tells us, to take a little rest: for as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings to keep them from the cold and the rain and the heat, and to protect them from the kite or the dog, so didst Thou gather Thy little ones, who were humble in heart, and though despised by the world were dear to Thee, saying to them: "Come ye apart into a desert place, where your eyes will not behold the vanities of the world, nor your ears be troubled by any distracting sounds, and rest ye for a while in meditation on the things of God, and in forgetfulness of those things which perish in the using."

And now, O most loving Jesus, Thou Who visitest the sick, and comfortest poor pilgrims shut out from the joys of Paradise, I beseech Thee to visit me in the time of my trouble and distress, whether it come to me in the form of weariness as I sit alone in my cell, or of dryness of soul as I sing in choir, or of taking too great pleasure in dainty food when I am in the refectory—when any of these temptations beset me, call me back,

I pray Thee, speedily to myself by the sacred words of Thy mouth, spoken to me as it were from Heaven, and sweeter far than any earthly food.

Give me a clear understanding of difficult passages in Holy Writ; and, where the meaning of Thy Word is plain and spiritual, kindle in my heart the fire of Thy love, as Thou didst in the hearts of the two disciples, which were warmed by Thy appearance to them and by Thy discourse; so that, being refreshed on their journey by the Word of God as well as by the food of which they partook, they gave thanks and said: "*Was not our heart burning within us concerning Jesus, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?*" These words are very sweet and pious, and are read and sung in choir with devout mind and joyful voice to the praise of God and His Saints by clerks and priests, by Canons and by Monks, by recluses and by nuns, of every habit and order, chiefly at Easter-tide and on the festivals of certain saints.[1]

O all ye Saints of God, pray for me in all my shortcomings during my pilgrimage on earth; for to this day I am often vexed by evil passions warring against me both from within and from without; pray for me that I be not overcome by the devil and his angels, and so fall short of those everlasting joys which are laid up in Heaven for

[1] [In the Offices for Easter week some of the verses and antiphons are taken from the Easter Monday Gospel, in which these words occur; and it is probable that in the diocese of Utrecht in the fifteenth century, upon a feast of "the Disciples of Emmaus," and possibly upon the Feasts of some other Saints, the words quoted were similarly used.]

Christ's servants; the remembrance of which ought surely to rouse me to fight bravely, by means of devout prayers and holy meditations upon the Life and Passion of Christ, against the evil thoughts and inclinations of my heart. Daily ought I to reflect upon one at least of the many wounds and sorrows of my Lord Jesus Christ, Who was crucified for me. His Wounds are the medicine of my soul; His Sacred words are shields of gold for me against the fiery darts of the enemy. May God be my refuge and defence everywhere and at all times, and may the grace of the Holy Spirit be ever with me. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII

Of the appearance of Christ to the disciples in Jerusalem, when it was late, and the doors were shut

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Peace of the godly, Hope of the just, Joy of faithful people gathered together in Thy Name, Comforter of the contrite in heart, and Visitor of Monks, for Thy glorious and miraculous appearance to Thy Apostles assembled together, when it was already late. No one knocked and no one opened: the windows and doors of the house had been tightly closed as a precaution for fear of the Jews. And this no doubt happened in order that Thy entrance and appearance might be seen to be truly and certainly due to Divine power alone, and not to any human power or agency, nor to any trick artfully contrived by the devil; for Thou art

very God, Who deceivest not, but dost hate and punish deceivers. Thou art Almighty, and therefore whatsoever Thou willest, that straightway comes to pass.

But the simple and the devout, such as were the Apostles and the other disciples assembled at that time in the upper room, Thou dost visit and enlighten; and so Thou didst comfort and lovingly greet them with the words, "*Peace be unto you: it is I, be not afraid.*"

I praise and honour Thee for Thy gentle and peaceful greeting of them after their distress which had been so great, and I clap my hands at the thought of a sight which must have been more than ever joyous as following so great trouble and alarm. They did indeed need to be visited, to be comforted, supported, and greeted anew. They had been lying under tribulations and temptations greater than they had ever before passed through; they had all fled like sheep when the shepherd of the flock was seized and put to death; and after having been scattered hither and thither they were so fearful and sad that, even now when it was late, they had only just taken heart to meet together and breathe again, as it were, once more.

I praise and magnify Thy sweet Name, O most loving Jesus, above all in heaven or on earth, for that Thou didst vouchsafe to show Thyself on this day to the terrified fugitives, to Thy unhappy and saddened Apostles, who had lost all heart, and no longer believed what Thou hadst so often told them about Thyself. But now Thou didst unspeakably gladden their hearts by friendly converse with them with Thy Own mouth: Thou didst put an end to all their doubt and fear by at once openly showing to them in Thy Hands and Feet and

sacred Side evident signs of Thy Passion: in their sight Thou didst eat some broiled fish and some honey-comb; and in order that they might have the joy of eating with Thee, Thou didst hand to them with Thy own Divine Hand that which was left: during the meal Thou didst cite Holy Scripture, didst solve their doubts and didst make hidden things plain; Thou didst enlighten their understanding, didst kindle their cold affections, and didst teach and explain to them what was needful and wholesome for them. Moreover, twice didst Thou give Thy peace to them with Thy heavenly blessing, so that they rejoiced with exceeding great joy at having seen the Lord their God, just as formerly, the Wise Men on seeing the Star in the heavens had rejoiced, and had at once cast aside all fear and doubt.

And presently, so as to strengthen them against all unbelieving gainsayers, and to blot out their misdeeds, Thou didst breathe upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit, saying to them: "*Receive ye* (given, as the greatest of all gifts, to you who for My Name's sake have forsaken the world) *—receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*"

How great indeed was the grace given to the Apostles by the breathing upon them of the Holy Spirit by the Mouth of Christ rising from the dead by the glory of the Father, so that not only were they themselves made safe and absolved from all their sins, but also full power was given to them of absolving others from their sins, of repelling the unworthy, and of binding the guilty! How glorious was that day, how blessed was that evening hour when Jesus came to the Apostles

with such glory and such joy, filling with heavenly gifts men who were living in retirement in obedience to Thy command!

O holy and beloved Apostle Thomas, would that thou hadst been present at this time and hadst been found with thy fellow-Apostles when Jesus came and said, "*Peace be unto you*"! But perhaps some need or other obliged thee to go out. Would that thou hadst come back in good time, and hadst heard and seen with the rest all that Jesus said and did! How good would it have been for thee, and for the assurance of thy faith.

But who has known Thy mind, O Lord? Or who has been Thy counsellor that Thou camest suddenly at a time when Thomas was not there, or perhaps had gone out and stayed away longer than he meant? Why, O good Jesus, didst Thou act thus; why didst Thou not wait a little for Thomas to come back? Why, O loving Jesus, didst Thou not say: "Where is Thomas; where is he who was so earnest in saying to his fellow-disciples: '*Let us also go, that we may die with Him*'?" O holy God, why didst Thou not send for him to come quickly and see Thee? Had I been there, and hadst Thou permitted, how willingly would I have gone to fetch him! Did not Samuel the prophet send to call David from the sheepfolds to come and be anointed King in the presence of his brethren?

But I know of a truth, and I believe, that Thou, O Lord, Who in Thy wisdom didst create the heavens and the earth, didst permit all this for wise and good reasons. Nothing upon earth is done without cause, though many there are who understand not Thy workings. It was not by chance that Thomas was absent, when Thou

camest and appearedst to the Apostles; nay, rather Thou didst act thus in Thy love, and in fulfilment of the dispensations of Thy wise providence, in order that many benefits might follow therefrom. One doubted in order that many might be confirmed in the faith. One erred, was taught better, and saw the error of his ways, in order that countless other souls might, by means of his conversion and preaching, come to a better knowledge of the truth. A man who doubts gains by asking questions, provided only that he does not persist in his doubt, and submits to the teaching of the Saints.

Many things there are which pass man's understanding, and, because of the depth of God's wisdom, men are not able to comprehend. If then a man's faith be tried let him not despair, but rather let him put his trust in the teachings of Holy Writ; for God has given to us, as a sure ground of hope for salvation, the example of many Saints and great Doctors, who were themselves in doubt upon many points, but presently came back to a right mind, turned to Christ in full assurance of faith, and profited others not a little. Gracious is the Lord Jesus; He spurns no one, He sends no one away; and if a man draws near to Him in simplicity of heart, He Himself instructs him in the truth, and never deceives him. Things which are beyond our comprehension should be committed to Him, to Whom all things are known, from Whom nothing is hid, Who orders those things which pass man's understanding both wisely and well. Let not then the unwise man be disturbed by the dealings of Jesus with His disciples, let him not find fault with that holy Apostle who was slow in believing;

for what happened to him by the Will of God might well have happened to any other man.

I beseech Thee, then, O most gentle Christ Jesus, Visitor of Monks, Supporter of the faint-hearted, Instructor of young and old, that Thou wouldst visit me whether I am sitting alone, or am studying or writing in my cell, or am taking part with my brethren in choir in singing and praying. Open to me the gate of eternal life, enlighten the darkness of my mind, put to flight the evil spirits who tempt me, drive away the many different fancies that crowd in upon me; when the doors of my bodily eyes are shut, come secretly into me; fill my heart with the peace and joy of Thy presence; and for the remission of my sins, make spiritually manifest to me those most sacred Wounds, Which Thou didst endure for me upon the Cross; by Which, when dying and rising again out of pure love for me, Thou didst redeem me from eternal death—Who, with the Father, etc. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV

Of the appearance of Christ, on the octave of Easter, when St. Thomas the Apostle was present

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Author of life, Bestower of pardon, Fountain of grace, Promiser of glory to be enjoyed with the holy angels in everlasting bliss. I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy gracious second appearance to all Thy Apostles when Thomas Thy Apostle, who till then had doubted, was present. This Thou

didst bring about in order that Thou mightest confirm him in the true and perfect faith, by allowing him to see and handle Thy glorious Body, adorned as It was with the sacred prints of Thy five Wounds, memorials of Thy most holy Passion for the Salvation of mankind.

I praise and glorify Thee for Thy joyful greeting, for showing Thyself openly to Thy Apostles, and for that heavenly benediction wherewith Thou didst bless Thy Apostles with Thy own sacred Lips, saying to them with cheerful countenance: "Peace be unto you, both now and in time to come: now indeed by faith and grace, but hereafter face to face, and by open vision: as the Father hath loved Me, even so love I you: abide ye in My love, and continue with Me; so will I abide with you, both now and for ever."

I praise and glorify Thee, O Jesus Christ, adorable Master and Lord, for Thy friendly greeting of peace, and for Thy adorable condescension in standing in the midst of Thy disciples to keep them from fear of the Jews. For, as a good shepherd stands in the midst of his sheep to defend them from the fangs of wolves, so didst Thou deal with Thy Apostles in their evil day, protecting them for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake against those things which were against them: and as a mighty king and noble prince stands armour-clad in the midst of his people, grasping spear and shield to withstand the darts of the enemy, while he encourages his soldiers to fight bravely, and either conquer or die happily, even so, O most brave Jesus, didst Thou stand in the midst of Thy disciples, clad in a robe of gladness and with the breastplate of immortality, as a warrior against evil spirits and perverse men, having on Thee, as

proof of Thy identity, the marks of Thy Passion, gaping Wounds in the shield of Thy Body, with which Thou didst vanquish the princes of this world and the rulers of outer darkness; that so Thou mightest confirm in faith, hope, and charity Thy soldiers the Apostles, who on seeing Thy Passion, Thy Death on the Cross, and Thy Burial in the tightly-sealed tomb, had grievously lost heart. And who indeed who had witnessed all those evident signs of death in Thee could ever have thought that Thou wouldst rise again to life?

It was in order that Thy beloved disciples, who were not yet fully confirmed in the faith, might not despair, that Thou didst show Thyself to them in visible form, with the Wounds of Thy sacred and glorious Body miraculously preserved on Thee in proof of the reality of Thy Resurrection; and it was in order that they might believe, and might no longer doubt of Thy actual appearance to them, that Thou saidst to them: "Handle Me, and see that I am that very Jesus Christ Who for your sake hung upon the Cross, and by the Power of God rose again the third day, as I so often plainly foretold you, though you did not then clearly understand Me. Behold then now My Hands and My Feet, and My Side, and above all mark well in Me the five Wounds of My Passion: meditate on them day and night, and think how great was the love I bore you, and how great were the sufferings I endured in order that you might have eternal life. Peace be to you, My friends, to you who despise the world, to you for whom, after you shall have overcome the many dangers of this life present, I have prepared everlasting joy in Heaven with the holy Angels. Fear not, be

not of little faith: I am your Reward, I am your Crown, I am your abundant Blessing!" Amen.

A Prayer for the obtaining of that peace of heart which Christ gave to His disciples

O Lord Jesus Christ, Fountain of sweetness, King of Heaven and earth, true Peace of hearts, and Comforter of those who mourn, say, I beseech Thee, to my soul, which is troubled and distressed as Thou best knowest: "I am Thy salvation, Thy Peace, Thy Life, Thy Comfort, Thy Hope, Thy Light and Thy Rest. In Me is all thy good, thy soul's true comfort, the only happiness that is real and that knows no end. What more wouldst Thou have?"

"Nothing, Lord; Thee alone would I have; Thee do I seek; Thee do I long for; Thee do I love from the bottom of my heart; Thee in everything, and above everything, everywhere and at all times, do I bless and praise. Thou rulest over all things that are in Heaven and on earth, in the sea and in all deep places, in the mountains and in the woods: to Thee is known every creature whether small or great, from Thine eye nothing is hid. In wisdom hast Thou made all things, and by Thy Providence are all things governed and preserved."

Oh when wilt Thou come to me, thou peace of God that comest from that clear knowledge of my Maker which passes all reason and the understanding both of angels and of men? Oh when wilt thou so fill me, both within and without, that nothing shall be left for me to desire? O Lord God, my heart can find no rest, until it rests in Thee! My mind can have no peace until it is perfectly united to Thee in that life which knows no end. O Peace, how sweet, how precious is thy name in all the

world! How full of joy and gladness is thy voice in our home which is above! O true, O supreme, O everlasting Peace with God, with angels, and with men of good will!

Give me, O Lord, I pray Thee, peace in my heart, that I may love Thee above all things; give me peace in my mouth, that I may praise Thee with true devotion; give me peace in my hand that I may do all my good works for Thy honour! When I am sad, say to me: "*Peace be unto thee; it is I, be not afraid.*" "*Peace be unto thee*"—than this what can be more pleasant to me? "*It is I*"—than this what possession can be more joyful? "*Be not afraid*"—than this what cause of rejoicing can be more secure? "*Behold, I am with you*"—than this what enjoyment can be more sweet from everlasting to everlasting; what surer and firmer ground can there be for believing, and for laying hold on life eternal?

Whatever, O Lord, I possess, whatever I see, whatever I long for, all is nothing without Thee. In Thee alone is all my wealth; than Thee there can be nothing better, nothing more perfect, nothing richer, nothing more blessed. In Thee, therefore, O God, my Saviour, is to be found all that I have and all that I hope for; all my safety, all my peace: nowhere else, in no created good, however lovely, however noble, however great, can I find it. I say, therefore, and I pray with holy and humble Francis: "My God, and my All! More I wish not for." And if ever I should be in distress, and be deprived of inward consolation and comfort, still would I say and pray: "My God, and my All!" I want nothing, I wish for nothing, O my God, but for Thee, Who art all in all, Who above all and before all art blessed

for ever. Give me grace, O Lord, to meditate intently upon these things, and ever faithfully to fulfil them. Amen.

CHAPTER XV

Of the touching of the sacred Wounds of Christ by the hand of St. Thomas the Apostle

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Enlightener of Thy faithful ones amidst the darkness of this world, I bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee, for the surpassing mercy shown to Thy holy Apostle Thomas by Thy special appearance to him, thus strengthening him in believing in Thy Resurrection, which passes all human understanding, and except by faith and Divine revelation is incomprehensible to fallen man. Many are the marvellous works, O Lord God, that Thou hast wrought since the foundation of the world; and even now Thou workest marvels in Heaven and on earth that they may declare the Glory of Thy Name. But although the mind of man cannot comprehend or fathom them, yet to Thee are they no hard task: they are wrought, and are ordained, chiefly for the salvation of the elect.

It was because Thy disciple, who was dear to Thee, did not persist in his opinion, and because he had no evil intent when he said he would not believe except he should see Thee and touch Thee —for this reason doubtless it was that he was found worthy to obtain so great mercy and grace as to be allowed to see Thee openly with his eyes, and reverently to touch Thee with his hand; and

this so unmistakably that all his doubt was at an end, and he was able to confirm in the faith those who were faint-hearted. Being convinced then of Thy Manhood, and believing from the heart that the Godhead was hidden therein, full of devotion and faith he exclaimed: "*My Lord, and my God.* This I firmly believe, this I honestly profess, this I openly declare, this I boldly proclaim, this I make known and long to tell forth to all the world, in order that all men may believe in Thee and be saved,—*My Lord and my God*, my Creator and my Redeemer! This is the true and established faith which leads to the Kingdom of heaven those who hold it."

How great and how abounding is Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hadst laid up for Thy saints, and for Thy chosen ones who are so dear to Thee; and how often, in this life even, dost Thou show it to them in their times of trouble and distress, giving them as it were a foretaste of it, and encouraging them, both by word and by example, to press on and to persevere. Sometimes, indeed, Thou hidest Thyself, in order that by mourning they may be led to seek Thee and long to behold Thee, and that by falling and growing cold they may come to know their own weakness, and may cease to be presumptuous and to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. And then once more Thou showest Thyself, comfortest those who are sorrowful, enlightenest them and teachest them; that so in adversity they may not despair, nor in prosperity be puffed up, but may know themselves to be but men, mortal and sinful, needing the grace and mercy of God, and not Angels already in glory.

I praise and extol Thy gracious tenderness in

that, after granting peace and pardon to Thy holy Apostle Thomas, as he knelt humbly and reverently before Thee, earnestly entreating Thy pardon, Thou didst manifest Thy love to him by showing to him Thy all-holy and glorious wound-prints, of more worth than all the treasures of the world, more precious than any jewels, more beauteous than the reddest of roses, sweeter than all spices or the sweetest-scented flowers. Those Wounds are more beauteous than all the stars which bespangle the firmament of Heaven; more than all else besides, those Wounds rejoice the souls of the Saints, inflame the hearts of the faithful, soften the hard hearts of sinners, and draw from them bitter tears; they rouse the slothful to more earnest prayers; they lead the devout to kiss them over and over again; they move men of good-will to fervent thankfulness. The frequent remembrance and earnest contemplation of those Wounds of Christ so stirred the inmost soul of the holy and most devout Father Francis, and made his eyes so run with tears, that their all-holy prints could be plainly seen upon his own body. And to this day those five holy Wounds of Jesus, worthy of all love, stir to their inmost depths the hearts of many a devout Religious, and even of many a man and woman living in the world; the sight of those Wounds brings tears to their eyes, as they gaze in church upon a picture of the Crucified, or hear the Passion of Christ preached, or read, or ponder thereon to the praise of God. Amen.

Of the great grace of devotion and the steadfast faith of St. Thomas the Apostle

O my God, how great was the grace of devotion which that holy Apostle Thomas received by

touching Thy sacred Wounds, grace beyond that vouchsafed to many of the Saints who beheld Thee during Thy life in the flesh, and believed in Thee after Thy Resurrection.

With all the powers of my soul therefore do I bless Thee, and give thanks to Thee, my Lord and my God, Who by Thy Apostles hast taught me to believe rightly, to lead a good life, and boldly and without equivocation to confess the true faith: for Thou hast said, and Thy word is truth: "*Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father.*" Give me, then, O Lord, I beseech Thee, grace always to speak the truth, and to confess the right faith, even as holy Thomas spoke before Thee in the presence of the other Apostles, saying: "*My Lord, and My God.*"

What can be plainer than those words, what more true, what more perfect, what more faithful? And so it is that blessed John writes thus: "*Thomas answered and said to Him* (that is, to Thee, my Lord and my God), '*My Lord and my God.*'" Many faithful souls have addressed Thee and called Thee by divers holy names, as their faith and their devotion moved them; and rightly and fitly was this done in accordance with Thy unspeakable Majesty, Which is far beyond the rank of, and the praise due to, any creature, and far above every name in Heaven and in earth. Some in prayer to Thee have said, "*Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me!*" Others have said, "*Son of David*"; others, "*Good Master and Lord*"; others, "*Rabbi or Rabboni*"; others, "*Teacher and Saviour of the World.*" Others have addressed Thee as "*Great Prophet and King of Israel*"; others (as John the Baptist) have said,

"*Behold the Lamb of God,*" or, as Nathaniel, "*Thou art the Son of God.*" Others, as Andrew, have said, "*We have found the Messias*"; or, as Simon Peter, and the other Apostles (by the revelation of the Heavenly Father), "*Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*" And in order that all the names declaring Thy Godhead, and all the words setting forth Thy holiness might be briefly, though fully and exactly, summed up in one word, and might be firmly believed, Saint Thomas (enlightened and fully instructed by God the Holy Ghost, and made strong in the faith by Thee, O Lord, then present with him) says openly and boldly in a loud voice to Thee, our Lord, "*My Lord and my God.*" In these words he gathers up briefly all that can be truly said and believed regarding Thy Divine and Human Nature in praise of Thee, and for the Salvation of all Christians, who throughout the world believe in Thee.

Grant to me, O Lord my God, that I may steadfastly cling to this holy and catholic faith; that I may adorn and defend it by good works, and may never swerve from the truth. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI

A prayer concerning the five sacred Wounds of Jesus Christ

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, most loving Son of God, crucified for the Salvation of the world, for all the anguish, and all the Sacred Wounds, whether great or small, which, innocent as Thou wert, Thou didst so lovingly

endure, and by Thy death in true charity and perfect obedience didst lay before Thy Heavenly Father, as a free and most acceptable offering, in order that Thou mightest wash away and deliver me from my sins.

And chiefly do I now praise and glorify Thee, and will praise and glorify Thee all the days of my life, with the best thanksgiving and blessing of which my lips are capable, with all the love which my inmost heart can contain, and with gratitude which knows no bounds, for Thy supreme and tender condescension in openly showing to Thy disciples the five sacred Wounds, Which Thou hadst preserved in Thy most holy and glorified Body after Thy blessed and glorious Resurrection; in presenting them before Thy disciples' eyes for them to look upon; and in graciously and unmistakably allowing Saint Thomas the doubting Apostle to touch them, thus establishing him in the faith. It was also Thy holy Will that these things should be set forth and proclaimed as a sign of Thy never-failing love for Thy disciples, and for all Thy faithful servants throughout the world, to the intent that their hearts might be full of love for Thee, and that they might never cease to praise Thee.

Right therefore and profitable is it that I should daily meditate upon Thy supreme love for me; so that, as those five most sacred Wounds of Thine remained ever in Thy glorified Body, like fresh and ineffaceable gashes in a shield, shining ever brighter than all the stars of heaven, so (on account of the innumerable benefits conferred by them, both in averting and removing the ills of this life, and in assuring us of eternal happiness to be enjoyed with Thee, O loving Jesus, in

realms of bliss hereafter) They may remain for ever fixed in my memory, and in that of all Thy faithful people.

Praise, honour, might, glory, and victory be to Thee, O Lord, for those sacred Wounds of Thine with which Thou hast redeemed me, hast cleansed the world, hast despoiled Hell, hast opened Paradise, hast illumined Heaven, and hast made the Angels to rejoice. In order that Thou mightest draw lost mankind to Thee, mightest reconcile it to the Father, and mightest turn aside His wrath, Thou didst, on Thy Ascension into Heaven, still preserve those sacred Wound prints: in order that thereby Thou mightest obtain mercy for me, and for all who believe in Thee and repent them of their sins, Thou didst take them with Thee to the Right Hand of the Father; and Thou hast never ceased to show them to all the inhabitants of Heaven, in token of Thy victory over death.

O Thou Wonder and Gladness, Thou Hope unbounded of those who believe in Thee; O Jesus Christ, King of glory, Brightness of the Father, Honour of Thy Mother, the Virgin's Joy, Son of Mary, Flower of the field, Lily of the valley, Comfort of the afflicted, Health of the sick, Joy of the devout, Blessedness of Saints, Delight of Angels, imprint, I pray Thee, with Thy Precious Blood, upon the tablets of my heart These Thy sacred and precious Wounds, that so I may inwardly suffer with Thee, may love Thee supremely and above all else; and may rejoice to bear willingly some slight reproach at any rate for the love of Thy most sweet and holy Name—that Name Which, infinitely above every name of holy Angels and of men, is blessed for ever, world without end.

Painted in scarlet, framed in gold, keep ever

before my wandering eyes the picture of Thy sacred Wounds, that I may neither see nor heed the vanities of the world, may be deaf to distracting gossip, and may not listen to those who would speak to me of other things than of Thee, O Jesus, my Lord and my God: for utterly worthless is everything that would keep me from meditating on the bliss of Heaven, and from bedewing with my tears Thy sacred Wounds.

Pierce my feet with Thy holy Nails as with sharp spurs to make me follow Thy steps along the rough path of adversity, and to keep me from being lifted up when things go well with me, or cast down when troubles come upon me. Cripple both my feet, so that I may not be able to stray far from Thee. Into my left foot drive the nail of fear, that from fear of the pains of Hell I may abstain from fleshly lusts. Into my right foot drive the nail of holy love, that with a soul on fire with a spirit of devotion to Thy service I may by day and by night run in the way of Thy commandments—giving thanks to Thee with eager zeal in hymns and spiritual songs; or if I am busy about earthly labours for the common good, working obediently and with a heart full of love for my brethren. Soon passing and easy to bear are all earthly toil and labour, thirst and bodily pain, for Thy sake, O my God, Who in the Flesh didst suffer and wert wounded; but long, infinitely long, are the everlasting torment and that fire of Hell which never shall be quenched.

Into my hands drive, I pray Thee, two of Thy Nails, so that while time is left me, I may be fruitful in good works, may shun contemptible idleness, that great enemy of the soul, and may with loving arms embrace Thee hanging for my

sake upon the Cross, covered with wounds, but still praying for Thy enemies.

Draw me therefore to Thee from the flesh to the Cross, from earth to Heaven. I long to depart, to die with Thee upon the Cross, to be washed by Thy Wounds from my sins, and to be rescued from everlasting death.

Thou art my God, and I will confess my sins unto Thee: heal me by Thy sacred Wounds, so cruelly for my sake inflicted upon Thee. Who can cleanse me from all my sins and from all my negligences, but Thou alone, O God my Redeemer, Who for me wast crucified and wounded with many wounds. Among these stand specially forth, shedding sweet perfume, shining as seals reddened with the Blood of the Lamb of God, Thy five precious Wounds, pierced with the nails and the lance. Burnt in are They with the brand of God's love, indelible and most sure proofs of my eternal redemption: full are they of grace and sweetness, displayed for me and all mankind to behold with the eye of faith, and to caress: offered are They to weeping penitents as passports into the inmost recesses of the courts of Heaven.

Enter then, enter boldly, O my soul, through the bowels of the mercy of Thy God as He hangs upon the Cross; enter into the deep clefts of His Wounds, and take refuge there from the serpent who everywhere, both openly and secretly, is laying snares for thee. There lie still in safety, as a turtle-dove cooing in the wilderness, as a cushat lying hid in the cleft of a mighty rock; spurn all earthly joys; meditate on the sacred Wounds of Christ; and hope, relying on Them, to win those heavenly rewards which He Himself has in store for thee.

Speak now, I pray Thee, O most loving Jesus Christ, speak to my soul, those saving words which Thou spakest to holy Thomas Thy Apostle when Thou didst confirm him in the faith, and as a proof of Thy surpassing love didst pardon all his sins: "Put in hither thy finger, and behold My Hands fixed with hard nails to the wood of the Cross for love of thee; reach hither thy hand so as to touch Me with it by faith; put it into My Side laid open in pity for thee, pierced so cruelly with the soldier's lance that thereout came there forth a plenteous stream of blood and water, for the perfect remission of all sins and the grant of mercy to all who believe. Be not faithless, but believing; give way no more to doubts, but stand firm and steadfast; be not over-curious, but simple and devout; be not sluggish and heedless, but warm-hearted and full of thankfulness to God for all His benefits to thee."

Give me grace, O good and beloved Jesus, often to think over and to ponder these things; to believe on, and to hold fast to Thee; never to doubt Thy words and Thy unchanging truth: give me grace in every temptation and trial to have recourse at once to Thy Passion, to look to Thy sacred Wounds and Agony for my comfort, and ever to find for my soul peace and rest in Thee—Who with the Father, etc. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII

Of the Armorial bearings of Christ, the Cross, the Nails, the Spear, and the Crown of Thorns

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, King of all kings, for the triumphant insignia of Thy Royalty, to wit, the Cross, the Nails, the Spear, the Crown of Thorns, the Reed, the Cord, the Pillar (to which Thou wast bound, and wast then cruelly scourged after Thou hadst been stripped naked), and for all the other instruments of torture and accessories of Thy sacred Passion. It was for us miserable sinners that Thou didst endure it, to the intent that Thou mightest thereby confound the devil and the lovers of this world with all its pomps and vanities; that Thou mightest show mercy and grant forgiveness of sins to all who truly repent and believe in Thee; and that Thou mightest win for them, after the general Resurrection of the dead (when every one must be judged, both just and unjust), the hope of eternal salvation and the glorious bliss of Heaven with Thy Holy Angels.

Then shall appear great signs in Heaven and on earth, and then shall be displayed the Wounds of Thy sacred Passion, with the Standard of the Cross, and the other achievements of Thy escutcheon; full of joy and comfort shall they be to the saved, but to the lost full of terror and dismay. Then shall all the elect rejoice exceedingly; the lowly, the innocent, the devout, the chaste, the simple, the obedient, the meek; those who have often suffered wrong for Thy Name's sake; those

who in their meditations have often mourned over Thy Passion and sacred Wounds, as if they had themselves endured Them, and have thanked Thee fervently for Them all. Then too shall greatly fear and lament for themselves the proud, the covetous, the envious, the gluttonous; those who give themselves up to fleshly lusts; those who seldom or never meditate upon Thy Passion and Thy Wounds; those who never compassionate Them, but prefer thinking about their own gain and advantage to pondering Thy benefits and Thy cruel Wounds.

From such perverse and unthankful men keep me, O Lord; and number me with the pure and innocent sheep of Thy flock, for whom, in Thy love, Thou didst vouchsafe to be crucified, to die, and to be wounded with many Wounds.

O most gentle Jesus, clothe me with the power of Thy might, invest me with the sacred badges of Thy most cruel Passion, that everywhere and at all times I may be sustained against the snares and the temptations of the evil spirit, who assails me on the right hand and on the left in a thousand different ways and manners, all of them bad and wicked. To Thy Passion then, O Lord, do I humbly fly for refuge; and heartily do I pray that of Thee I may be comforted and powerfully assisted.

O loving Jesus, our Helper and Defender in all the trials and temptations of this imperfect life, raise high, I pray Thee, before my eyes the royal standard of Thy holy Cross, the sign of eternal salvation, the Sceptre of Thy Godhead, the shield and the bow of Thy Manhood, the impregnable fortress, the most dread thunderbolt, the most sharp javelin against the roaring and the onslaught of the devil; against the din of the world

and the incitements of the flesh; against vices of every kind and every evil thought; against that spirit of blasphemy and utter despair, which longs to overwhelm me, and would so often withhold me from invoking Thy most sweet Name, O Jesus, and those of Thy holy Mother Mary and of Thy Saints; that tries to blacken the story of their lives and their good report; and what is yet worse, would entice from the right faith one who is a true believer, and keep him from venerating and from loving Thy holy Cross.

May Thy Cross, O Jesus, Thou mightiest of kings, be to me salvation, peace, and life; a shield, a sword and a spear; a strong tower against the face of the enemy; an impregnable wall against the deceit of the old serpent; a light in the house; a guide in the path; a sure defence within and without, above and below, in all the many stumbling-blocks and dangers which everywhere beset me. May Thy sweet and beloved Cross be to me rest in labour, comfort in sorrow, medicine in sickness, ointment in pain; may it be to me my protection when I am alone, my safeguard when I am with others, my light in darkness, my gladness at mid-day; and at eventide may it be to me praise and honour, power and glory. May Thy lovely and glorious Cross be to me in bitterness sweetness; in sickness health; in my agony steadfast faith; in the hour of my departure my one hope; at the day of judgement my support; from Hell my safeguard; from all its pains my warrant of discharge; into the glories of Heaven my passport with the holy Angels.

Further, in all my troubles thrust into me, I pray Thee, O patient Jesus, those holy Nails, which as Thou hangedst on the Cross were so

cruelly driven into Thee. May They be to me as keepers of my heart, of my lips and of all my senses; may They be my defence against the evil spirits, of whom by day and by night I am in fear: on seeing the image of Thy Nails may those spirits flee from me as if they were sharp arrows, and let me rest in Thy peace, or pray, or earnestly meditate on the anguish caused by Them when They were in the Body of Jesus Christ, my Lord; may those spirits not dare to vex me with vile imaginations as I meditate on the sacred Wounds, so cruel and so deep, Which Thou didst endure in Thy Hands and in Thy Feet.

Thrust also, I pray Thee, into my side, whether I am waking or sleeping, that holy and sharp Spear with which after Thy death Thou wast so cruelly pierced; may it keep my heart, so that inwardly compassionating Thee, I may hang with Thee upon the Cross, and may eschew what is earthly, may shut my eyes to all unprofitable things, and may fix my thoughts wholly upon the things of God, and upon Thy sacred Wounds. So wound my heart, I pray Thee, O my God, that nothing that is impure may find a home in it.

O Jesus Christ, supreme object of love, sure Hope of believers, Strength of those who fight, the victors' Crown, Wisdom of the wise, and Light of the ignorant, show, I pray Thee, to me, who am an exile in the prison-house of the flesh, that holy and blessed Crown of Thorns Which in mockery was so cruelly forced and pressed down upon Thy sacred Head, while Thy most holy Blood was trickling down on all sides from the many Wounds which it caused. May the copious stream of Blood caused by this holy but most cruel of crowns be to me a complete washing away of all

my sins; may it draw from my eyes a flood of tears; may it soften unawares the hardness of my heart. May the remembrance of this holy and blessed Crown ever present with me, and its picture ever vividly stamped upon my mind; may the contemplation of Thy Wounds and the thought of the terrible pain which they caused Thee, drive out of my mind all evil things, and all unclean thoughts, and chase away and put an end to whatever it is that troubles me. A violent headache suppresses all bodily desires. May then pain such as Thou didst feel when the cruel Crown of Thorns was first pressed down upon Thy Head take possession of me; may it find a place in the inmost recesses of my heart; may it vibrate through my every limb, may it rack me with pain, and purge away from my soul all the filth which by a long course of foolishness I have allowed to settle there. May it break down and annihilate in me every inordinate desire; may it turn into dust everything that seems to me lovely, and into dirt everything that seems to me precious: may it turn into rottenness all that now seems flourishing; may it turn all that now seems delightful into wormwood of the bitterest, everything joyous into wailing, everything laughable and jocose into derision and contempt.

How beautiful is the world to come, and how splendid will be the crown of heavenly glory that will be given to the chaste and devout soul, which in this world often and sadly meditates upon the Crown of Thorns of Jesus, and ever keeps in mind and mourns over his cruel Wounds. I believe, O Lord, that at the hour of death such a soul will, when quitting this weary life, have great hope of forgiveness and feel sure of obtaining mercy,

if it keep ever in remembrance Thy sacred Passion.

For the sake, therefore, O Lord, of each of Thy Wounds, forgive me too, I pray Thee, all my sins, whether they be of my life past or those which I daily commit, even as Thou didst forgive, solely of Thy grace and mercy, those of holy Mary Magdalene, who shed many tears at the thought of her sins, and particularly at the thought of the sacred Wounds endured by Thee at Thy Passion, on account of our sins which are, alas, so many and so grievous. Thy love and Thy mercy, O most merciful Jesus, have far outweighed all our sins whether new or old, by reason of Thy bowels of mercy and the thousand thousand stripes of the Wounds which Thou didst so patiently endure at the hands of wicked men; and all these were seen by Thy holy Mother, and by Thy dearly loved Mary Magdalene, with their own eyes, and were by them bedewed with many tears.

Rend then, O Lord, my heart still further with the thought of Thy scourging, and of Thy tight binding with cords to the stony pillar, before the eyes of the crowd that mocked and derided Thee, that pitied Thee not, that had no sense of shame, but longed to tear Thee with their teeth as if they had been mad dogs worrying a harmless sheep; that piled stripes upon stripes, and added anguish to anguish, while not a murmur passed Thy lips, no, not even a cry "Alas, alas, why do ye scourge me so cruelly?"

O how great, how unspeakable was Thy patience, O Lord Jesus, in enduring such torments, such bleeding wounds; and all in order that Thou mightest pay the penalty of my sins! It was I, O Lord, who had sinned; it was in my stead that

Thou wast scourged. It was I who had wrought iniquity; it was I who in so many ways and so often had offended; it was Thou Who hadst done no wrong at all, Who wast unjustly condemned by the ungodly. I often laugh about nothing, and Thou by base men art made a laughing-stock. I like to strut in fine clothes, but Thou hangest naked between thieves. I have good food and drink; but to Thee upon the Altar of the Cross are offered bitter gall and vinegar. I have a soft bed to sleep upon; but Thou art buried as an outlaw in a tomb of hardest rock. Often do I pass Thy Cross without shedding a tear; but Mary Magdalene and the other holy women never ceased to weep till they saw Thee rising from the dead, and could fall low and clasp Thy sacred Feet.

Give me grace, O loving Jesus, to meditate on these things, and with holy Mary Magdalene, who loved Thee so well, and with Thy other disciples so to weep, that at the last day, when the trumpet shall sound, I may be found worthy to rise in glory, and to find a place with Thine elect in the Kingdom of everlasting bliss. Amen.

May Thy most glorious escutcheon, O Lord Jesus Christ, be my sure defence, both within and without, against all the darts of the enemy, and against all the flatteries and frowns of this deceitful world.

CHAPTER XVIII

Of the appearance of Christ to the seven disciples as they were fishing in the Sea of Tiberias

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, and Ruler of Heaven and earth, of Angels and of men, of high and low, of rich and poor, of landsmen and of seafarers, for openly showing Thyself to Thy seven disciples who were toiling in fishing on the Sea of Tiberias. They were so employed in order that they might be able to procure the necessaries of life, and might be able to give food to the poor and to strangers. Such toil is pleasing to God and to men; it is in accordance with the law of nature, and is favoured by God on account of the many advantages which come from it, and because it prevents idleness and is a profitable use of time.

I praise and honour Thee, most loving Jesus, Visitor of toilers, and timely Helper of the needy by the gift to them of good counsel, enabling them to earn a livelihood by sea and by land.

I bless Thee for Thy condescension in standing by the seashore watching the toil of Thy disciples, working as they did in loving partnership and helping one another, doing everything in due order, and drawing their fishing-nets to land quietly and without quarrelling. Peter, as I suppose, was sitting at the stern, in charge of the helm, as being captain of the boat, and the most

experienced fisherman; and as he gave his orders and beckoned to them, the rest worked hard, while James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, who were skilled fishermen (having been instructed in the art by that experienced old man, their father) sat steadily and cautiously at their oars ready to do what was needed in case of a sudden storm; and holy Thomas, that strong and trusty man, was on the alert to draw in the net, along with holy Nathaniel, well versed in the law of God, who stood with his loins girt ready to help in this holy work, and two other disciples, whose names I know not, but haply they were Simon and Jude, Thy relations and dear friends.

These men, thus wisely placed, had toiled all night, rowing and hauling the net, working hard till morning; but as yet they had taken nothing. Wherefore thinking their toil useless, they were on the point of ceasing to fish unless God's Providence should otherwise direct.

But this fruitless toil in fishing had been so ordained that when Jesus, their Master and Lord, should come to them and tell them what to do, their joy might be great. It was because Jesus had not been bodily present in the boat during the past night, as formerly He had used to be, that they had caught nothing, or almost nothing, even as He had foretold them: "*Without Me ye can do nothing.*"

But on this occasion be not cast down, O beloved disciples; for, if God so wills it, a dull morning often ushers in a bright noon-day. Wait a little, and call upon your loving Lord Christ; and your toil of last night shall be crowned with success. And so it was when Jesus appeared, and

said to them: "*Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find* much, although before I came to you you could catch nothing at all."

I praise and glorify Thee, O my Jesus, Whose foreknowledge is infinite, for what Thou didst so lovingly say to those poor fishermen, who as yet had no settled means, no Church revenues to depend upon; but in order that they might not be a burden to others by demanding maintenance, and might not by their idleness be a stumbling-block to the weak, were procuring in a lawful manner, by the labours of their hands, the necessaries of life. Thou didst come then, O good Jesus, to the help of Thy poor followers in this their time of need, by asking them if they had anything to eat, naming in a friendly way something besides bread: "*Children,*" Thou saidst, "*have ye any meat?*" They answered: "*No.*" A brief answer was this; but it was enough for the Almighty Lord Who knew all things from all eternity, to Whom all hearts are open, and from Whom no secret is hid, Who knew both what was in the ship and what was swimming in the sea. Thou hadst pity then, O good Jesus, on their poor estate, just as formerly Thou hadst pity upon the multitude which in the wilderness had nothing to eat; and Thou gavest, without delay, by a single word, to those Who obeyed Thee, advice and help. When, therefore, putting in good faith their hope in God and not in their own skill, they let down the net on the right side of the ship, in accordance with the command of the Lord as He stood on the seashore, without their having to use their oars, He helped them by His words more than all else besides. For lo, when Jesus

helped them, their net was filled with such a multitude of fish that they could not drag it to land. So vastly do the gifts of God exceed the power of men.

On seeing this so great miracle, the disciple whom Jesus loved says to his partners, and specially to Peter, "*It is the Lord.*" On hearing this Peter rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and his heart was on fire with such intense love that, leaving the rest in the ship, and thinking of nothing else, he leaped at once into the water, and girding up his coat, hastened to Jesus his Lord, Whom, Blessed for evermore, he loved above every other holy name.

With what reverence and confidence did he draw near and kneel in the water at Thy Feet, O Lord Jesus, adoring and worshipping Thy Face, more brilliant than the sun, ever looked upon by the holy Angels, the sight of Which was now for a brief season granted to him and to his companions for their consolation, but is utterly denied to the great ones of the earth and to the rich in this world's goods, and to those devoted to the pleasures of the table.

O loving and most sweet Jesus, turn not away Thy face from me, no matter where I may be, or in what work engaged. Come and stand by my side when I am singing, or reading, or meditating, or writing, or studying. Remember me for good; and when any trial comes suddenly upon me give me a heart full of patience: give me grace to bless Thee always with my lips, and to bear all things patiently for love of Thee and for Thy honour. Come to me at night when the bell rings for Matins, so that I may rise at once to join my brethren in chanting the psalms, and may help

them, after the pattern of those Apostles who helped one another in fishing, and toiled all the night till the day dawned and Thou camest with Thy blessing; for at Thy coming and blessing their toil, their net was filled with a multitude of large fish.

Vouchsafe, I pray Thee, O Lord, in like manner to fill me, by Thy preventing and following grace, with so great a sweetness of inward devotion, that at the time of prayer many long psalms may be more delightful to me than plenty of great fish would be to a hungry man:[1] for refreshment of the mind is a greater thing than that of the body. The spirit gives new life to, the flesh weighs down, the man; the spirit purifies and gladdens him; the flesh defiles and saddens him. The spirit submits itself to, and obeys, God; the flesh often resists and is harmful: for the soul is better than the body; the living spirit is more worthy than the flesh that must so soon decay. The world is sweet; but God, Who is the Maker and the Ruler of all things, is sweeter than all else, and more highly exalted.

Everywhere and always blessed be Thou, O Lord Jesus Christ, my God, Who alone workest great wonders in the sea and on the land; for with Thy chosen friends Thou dost not disdain to eat and to sit down to meat; Thou preparest for them a sacred and spiritual banquet in hymns and psalms which are sweeter than all earthly food and the most exquisite of wines. Amen.

[1] [Cf. Introduction, page xxii.]

CHAPTER XIX

Of the meal taken by Christ with those same disciples of His

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Comforter of those in distress, Pitier of the poor, Giver of food to the hungry, Strengthener of toilers, for the actual meal which Thou didst take with Thy disciples, and for the abundant draught of a multitude of great fish taken by the hands and by the toil of Thy disciples, before Thy eyes, and by the power of Thy words when Thou saidst to them: "*Cast the net on the right side of the ship: and you shall find.*" Great indeed is God's grace! Thou art the Maker of all things; Thou providest for the little ones and for the poor; for those who have no storehouses full of food, nor money-bags stowed away in chests. Woe to those who put their trust in their coffers, for in one night thieves may empty them and squander their contents.

I praise and glorify Thee, most glorious Jesus, for Thy friendly invitation to Thy disciples to eat with Thee after their long fast and their hard toil in fishing when Thou saidst to them: "*Come and dine;* for I have got ready for you, who are hungry and tired, bread and broiled fish. If any of you is cold, let him come to the fire and warm himself. If the clothes of any of you are soiled, or his boots are wet, let him wash them and dry them at the fire which has been kindled at My command. Ye know well what I did to you formerly at the Supper before My Passion when I washed your feet and dried them, and what My

words to you were about showing humility and charity one towards another, even as I had before so long time preached to you by My example: and now, after My Resurrection, I appear to you in order that I may eat with you, and may admonish you to observe carefully what I have told you.

"I have no need of food, but to prove to you the verity of My glorified Body I now speak to you and eat with you. Break your fast therefore with me in love, soberly and modestly, in silence, abstaining from idle talk, as I have taught you, and ye have seen Me do, and have often heard Me bid you. Never have light words passed My lips, but always such as were pleasing to My Father, and profitable and edifying to those who heard them. Witnesses of this are the four holy Gospels published throughout the world, in which is to be found not a word that is idle, not a word that is unseemly. Be then content with the scanty food which ye see before you, which I made ready for you, my children, who said: 'We have no meat': there is here no roast fowl or spiced chicken—things suited to dainty feeders, not to men and women in Religion—be ye thankful to have plain food, the bread and the fish which is by God's grace lovingly permitted you. Perchance by reason of strangers and poor folk coming to you, whom ye ought not to turn away, but should to the best of your power comfort and cherish, that which is provided may not be enough for you: therefore I say to you, be not down-hearted when ye have but little, but putting your trust in Me bring some of the fish which ye have just caught in such abundance, and with so much gladness of heart."

When Simon Peter heard this, being quick and

prompt in obedience, he went up at once, and with the help of his companions drew the net to land full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty and three. And they all wondered, giving thanks to God the Father, and to Thee, His Son Jesus Christ, Whom they saw before them, and knew by the grace of the Holy Ghost. And so none of them dared ask Thee "Who art Thou Who standest here with us and speakest to us, and eatest with us?" For they all knew of a truth that Thou wert Jesus Christ, their Lord, Who had risen from the sealed tomb, alive and never more to die, and had manifested Himself to them.

I praise and thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, dear Friend of all the devout, sweet Visitor of the joyful soul, constant Guest of Thy brethren and of Thy friends, for the excellent meal and social feast which Thou didst prepare for Thy disciples who were tired out with their long toil in fishing, when Thou didst bid them to a meal and didst give them with Thy own Hand bread, which Thou hadst Thyself blessed, and in like manner broiled fish, hot with love, inwardly seasoned with spiritual sweetness. O how sweet must have been the flavour of that food of which Jesus Himself was at once the Cook, the Server, and the Refectorian!

What can I say more? Pleasant indeed was that feast of which Jesus then partook with His disciples: much more excellent, however, much grander, and much pleasanter, is that sacred banquet of His precious Body and Blood, which is day by day celebrated in Church, in Which Jesus Himself is received, but is not destroyed; in Which the remembrance of His Passion, undergone for our sakes, is kept alive; in Which the mind, in itself too often dry and cold, is filled with

grace by the presence of Jesus making the heart ready to shout for joy. In that sacred Feast moreover a pledge of future glory is given to the devout soul for its comfort, and for its spiritual sustenance in this its pilgrimage, till such time as Christ shall come and take it to Himself, out ot all the labour and sorrow of this present life, to its everlasting rest in the company of those holy Apostles of His, in the house of His Father, where shall be neither hunger nor thirst, but joy in His Presence for evermore. Unwillingly do I quit that holy and blessed company of the saints, and that precious feast which Jesus shared with His disciples on the shore of the Lake. From my inmost soul I long and pray to be made now in this life present (by contempt of the world and by the renouncing of all those things which perish and decay) one of the least of those disciples whom Jesus loves; and I hope (not for any merits and labours of my own, but by the grace of God, and the mercy of Christ Jesus my Lord) to be found worthy to be visited by Him in His heavenly Kingdom, to be comforted by Him, to rejoice with all the Saints, and to be made blessed for ever in glory. Amen.

CHAPTER XX

Of the sweet converse of Jesus with St. Peter and St. John the Apostle about loving Him

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus, most gracious Lover of men, and most wise Teacher of babes, for Thy sweet converse with holy Peter about love for Thee, and chiefly for Thy thrice

repeated question to him, and for Thy courtesy in specially mentioning the name of his father, at which he himself may well have been astonished and rejoiced greatly. When speaking with him Thou didst put to him one question only, namely, about the closeness of his love, saying to him: "*Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?*"

I praise and glorify Thee, O most illustrious Jesus, for Thy unspeakable gentleness and goodness in not reproaching holy Peter for the grievous sin which he had committed against Thee; and in choosing rather to rouse him to greater fervour by asking him about his love for Thee, which all the time Thou knewest full well, but didst wish to make known to his brethren who stood by. Further, Thou didst thus make plain to the whole Church throughout the world in what high esteem, even after his fall, Peter's rank and holiness were to be held, and how unchanged was his place in Thy love. And this Thou didst lest some other fallen one, not remembering his own case, should think slightingly of one, with whom Thou, O Lord, didst not disdain to converse so lovingly, and to sit down to meat.

I praise Thee, and greatly commend holy Peter Thy Apostle, my pattern next after Thee, for his straight and outspoken answer to Thy words. There was no presumption, no carelessness, in what he said; he did not put himself forward as excelling others in his love for Thee; thus teaching me and all men to be humble in our opinion of ourselves, to be cautious in our thoughts, to answer questions discreetly, and boldly and truthfully to confess the Christian faith no matter what men may say against it. Thrice (in honour of the

Holy Trinity) did he repeat his answer; and because, moved by fear, he had thrice denied his Lord, so now, believing with his whole heart, and nothing doubting, he three times says: "*I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee.*" What more could he say? "*Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.*"

"Holy Peter, what sayest thou if men who see not thy heart believe not thy words?" "I speak to my Lord, and cry out so that all may hear me, and with heart and lips boldly profess: 'Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me: Thou hast known my downsitting, in my denial of Thee; and Thou hast known my uprising, in my bitter tears and true penitence. Thou hast pardoned, O Lord, Thou hast pardoned, my sin against Thee. For Thy Holy Name's sake Thou hast forgiven all my sins; sweet is Thy mercy, and manifold are Thy loving-kindnesses over all Thy works from everlasting to everlasting, world without end.'"

I praise and glorify Thee, O most sweet Jesus, for Thy faithful and loving commendation of Thy lambs and of Thy sheep to the care and pastoral charge of holy Peter, Thy Apostle, who loved Thee so well, and was so dear to Thee, whom Thou didst call from the catching of fish to the cure of souls, and to the government of all the Churches; from a boat to a Bishop's throne; from the use of miserable nets to a royal priesthood; from a poverty-stricken home to the office of Roman Pontiff, an office to which Thou didst not prefer any of the Saints before him. For of Thy great mercy, and of the bounty of Thy grace alone, Thou didst make choice of him to be, in

Thy Own holy stead, Thy faithful and true Vicar, with full delegation of Thy power over all churches and realms, not for the ill-treatment or injury of any young lamb or poor weak sheep committed to his care, but for the protection and comfort, for the edification and the safe-keeping of all the faithful, young and old, throughout the world.

Therefore with Thy own Mouth Thou didst carefully instruct Peter himself, and didst lay the same command upon all other Bishops, saying: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, both great and small, both rich and poor; for I have redeemed them with My Own Blood. Remember, Peter, what thou wast before I called thee from the ship to the dignity of an Apostle, and to what still greater honour and dignity by my special grace and mercy thou hast now been advanced in spite of thy threefold denial. Thou hast been made chief pastor and ruler of all the Churches, not for thy own praise and honour, but in order that thou mayest ever seek my glory and that of My Heavenly Father and of the Holy Ghost, and mayest keep in peace those entrusted to thee."

I praise Thee, O most loving Jesus, for the gracious friendliness of Thy discourse with holy Peter and holy John, who were endeared to Thee by ties of special love. By Thy own example Thou didst give to Peter (already well-instructed) strength to die upon his cross; but of John, the youth so dear to Thee, Thou didst postpone the departure, in order that he might teach and might commit to writing the deeper and more essential mysteries of Holy Church; and with provident kindness Thou didst long time preserve his life for the consolation of many of the faithful. When therefore Peter asked of Thee what John's

end would be, Thou didst briefly answer: "I mean him to tarry thus in the body, in order that he may teach the whole Church, and may devote himself to the care of My Mother, whom from My Cross I commended to him. It is My Will that he live long, and commit to writing certain very deep things concerning My Divinity, My Incarnation, My Passion, and My Resurrection, things which he has seen with his own eyes, and heard often from My lips; and I will that he do this till such time as I shall come in person to him, and shall take him rejoicing to Myself. What is this to thee, Peter? Follow thou me: follow Me in bearing thy cross for My sake; for great indeed is the honour that awaits thee, that, namely, of suffering for My sake upon the cross a death like My Own."

When all these things had been said and quietly ordered, the bodily repast came to an end; but so need not the spiritual, which is better enjoyed by the way of devout meditation and prayer than by way of a lengthy recital.

I beseech Thee, therefore, O most loving Lord Jesus Christ, best of all Physicians of the fainting soul, that in all the changes and chances of this weary life on earth Thou wouldst guide my steps aright upon the path which will bring me in the end to the kingdom of Thy Glory in Heaven. Suffer me not to be puffed up with pride as I read or sing in Choir in the presence of my brethren, who are better men than I: as I study, or copy holy books for our convent, suffer me not to think much of myself, or to compare myself with men who are more learned than myself, or have been endowed by Thee with keener mental gifts: suffer me not in this way to lose, here

upon earth the fruit of good works, and in the world to come my eternal reward with Thee in Heaven.

Keep me also, O Lord, when the blast of temptation is strong upon me, from losing my temper and being angry with my brethren: give me grace lovingly to bear with the peculiarities and the failings of others, and to make excuses for them as I should for myself, if those failings were my own; even as Thou, Lord, by long and often bearing with them, and by gently admonishing them to strive after greater perfection, didst so excellently instruct Thy disciples.

Give me grace to follow Thee and holy Peter along the way of the Cross, by patiently bearing toil of body and sorrow of heart, even unto death.

Of Thy great mercy grant to me, an unworthy sinner, in company with holy Thomas, that outspoken and faithful Apostle, mentally to touch and handle Thy most sacred Wounds, and to meditate thereon daily at Mass, in my cell, at table, at all times and wherever I may be, by way of thanksgiving for Thy benefits, for the love of Thy Holy Name, and for the honour of Thy Holy Cross.

Grant to me also that, with holy John the Apostle, I may love Thee with a pure heart and a pure body; that I may specially venerate holy Mary thy Mother who was entrusted to his care; that I may gladly hear and read his holy Gospel; that I may keep it ever in my heart; and that I may rest, as it were, upon Thy Breast, caring nought for the things of this world, and gazing upon the secret things of Heaven, even as he did in the Apocalypse.

Be merciful to me, O Lord, and keep me, under

the protection of blessed James the Apostle, from all the sins which beset me. Strengthen me in all virtuous and godly living, that I may be able to resist the snares of the devil whether they come to me by way of things pleasant, or of things disgusting; for to Thee and to Thy holy Angels they are all most hateful and displeasing. Grant me also grace to root out all pride of intellect; to curb my longings for dainty food; to be watchful over the door of my heart, of my lips, and of my other senses. Give me grace, O Son of God, to drink with the sons of Zebedee the chalice of Thy Passsion, for the remission of all my sins, and with them and with all Thy Saints to sup with Thee in the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER XXI

Of the appearance of Christ to the eleven disciples on Mount Thabor in Galilee

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Heaven and earth, Who weighest the mountains in a balance, and holdest the earth in the hollow of Thy Hand, Who sittest above the Cherubim and the Seraphim, looking down upon the depths beneath, Who walkest above the stars of Heaven, Who observest the ends of the earth, Who knowest all things before they have their being.

I bless, I praise, I glorify Thee for that joyful, glorious, and sublime appearance of Thine on Mount Thabor to Thy eleven disciples, even as before Thy Passion Thou didst openly and dis-

tinctly promise them, saying unto them: "*I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*"

First, then, Thou didst forewarn them of two things, painful to the friends who were dear to Thee, and sad for them to hear, namely, the striking of the Shepherd, meaning thereby what Thou wert to suffer at the hands of the Jews, and the dispersion of the flock which would follow shortly after, namely, their own misery and flight in fear of punishment and death. But lest, sinking under the burden of their troubles, they should give way to despair, Thou didst straightway go on to speak of two very gladsome and consoling joys of good things to come, assuring them that on the third day Thou wouldst rise again in glory, and wouldst comfort them by appearing to them in a certain place which was well-known to them, that is to say on Mount Thabor in Galilee, the land in which Thou hadst formerly wrought many signs and wonders in the presence of Thy disciples and of all the people.

O Galilee, hallowed soil, fatherland of Christ, wherein lies Nazareth, the flowery City; that city which sheltered, and was made illustrious by the presence of Holy Mary the Virgin, of whom came forth to us those everlasting joys of our Salvation, which are recorded in the Holy Gospels.

I praise and glorify Thee, O Jesus, for Thy great goodness in having summoned Thy disciples to this holy and private spot, shut off from the noise of the world, a place fit to be chosen for the delivery of Thy Divine commands. On that spot Thou hadst already been transfigured—the other Apostles being absent—in the presence of

three chosen witnesses, Peter, James and John, and as a voice from the Father came from Heaven, Thou wast clothed and adorned with an excellent brightness; and by a revelation, of which they alone were witnesses, Thy Majesty was, before Thy Passion, made known to Thy disciples for the confirmation of their faith.

In this more public appearance, however, after Thy most glorious Resurrection, Thou didst manifest Thyself to a larger number of Thy disciples, in order thereby to confirm the faith of those who believed; to convince the doubting ones; lovingly to instruct and rejoice the hearts of all by Thy Presence, and by manifesting to them the power over everything in Heaven and on earth given Thee by the Father. When, therefore, Thou hadst with Thy own Lips declared these things to them, those who were then present with Thee adored Thee as was meet, and glorified Thy Holy Name. Prostrating themselves at Thy feet, they rejoiced in singing with the deepest devotion a new hymn to Thee, our God; for mysteries concerning the Holy Trinity so deep and wondrous were then made known to them, that no one can fully give expression to them. How glorious and entrancing was that vision; how unfathomable and Divine that revelation; how great and unspeakable was the joy that filled the hearts of the holy Apostles!

I praise and glorify Thee, O most sweet and most gentle Jesus, for having conversed so graciously with Thy disciples on the Mount; for Thy revelation to them of the true faith of the Holy Trinity; and for Thy delivery to them of the right form of words for the baptism of the faithful, in water, for the remission of sins, *in the Name of*

the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. In these words, as I believe, was I myself baptized by a faithful priest; and thereafter I was in the bosom of Holy Church, by faithful parents, educated and instructed in the right and Catholic faith.

For this I give thanks to Thee, O Christ; for it is from Thee that every good gift comes, and the hope of life eternal—to which hope, O Lord, when the hour of my departure shall come, mayest Thou vouchsafe to bring me, assisting me by the merits of the saints, and delivering me from the most grievous pains of purgatory. It is for me to pray; it is for Thee to help. I am weak and unstable, Thou art full of loving-kindness and mercy; Thou canst deliver me from distress of every kind; Thou canst bring me to the Mount of Thy Glory. O Jesus, saving health of my countenance, and my God, to Thee do I cry; for Thee do I long; to Thee do I pray by day and by night, till such time as, by the help of Thy grace alone, I shall be brought in safety to Thee, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest, etc. Amen.

TREATISE II

PART II

OF THE ASCENSION, OF PENTECOST, AND OF CERTAIN OTHER MATTERS

PART II

CHAPTER I

Of the Ascension of the Lord, and of His last appearance

I BLESS Thee, and give Thee thanks, O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, Maker of Heaven and earth, Lord of Angels, and Saviour of men, Who abhorrest the proud, and comfortest the humble: I bless Thee and give thanks to Thee for having on this day—in the sight of Thy disciples, with joyful countenance, and with Thy glorious Body clad with light as with a garment, amid the songs of angels, with the voice of the trumpet and with a merry noise, by the power of Thy own might—ascended in triumph far above the heavens in all their vastness, above the starry firmament, above the Cherubim and the Seraphim, above the glory of the Angels, and the most exalted of created things. I bless and thank Thee for that, after having overcome the prince of this world, Thou didst open the way of life and glory to the friends, whom Thou hadst chosen and united to Thee, whom Thou hadst

called out of the world, and to whom Thou hadst given strength to follow Thee along the rough way of the Cross.

O Lord, my God, how excellent is Thy Name in all the world! O King of Heaven, how glorious was Thy return to the Kingdom of Thy Father! With what great honour and glory wast Thou crowned above all Thy Saints, and how worthy wast Thou of being made to sit at the Right Hand of Thy Father, because Thou didst deliver Thy Soul to death, and didst vouchsafe to die for the ungodly, in order that Thou mightest give life to Thy people, and mightest make them sit down with Thee at Thy table in Thy Kingdom—prepared for them before the foundation of the world, not because of their own merits or virtues, but for Thy mercies' sake alone, and of Thy unbounded love and pity. How surpassing is the dignity of man's estate, in that our nature, taken into the Person of God, should be placed above every creature in Heaven and on earth. Right and meet therefore is it, that at Thy Name, O most sweet Jesus, all creatures, whether in Heaven, or on earth, or in Hell, should in thanksgiving and bounden duty of praise fall down and bow the knee; should adore Thy glorious Presence; should kiss the footstool of Thy Feet; and should praise and magnify Thy glorious and Holy Name above all things, world without end.

I praise and magnify Thee for Thy gracious visitation of, and last appearance to, Thy disciples as they were sitting assembled together in the Room of the Last Supper, conversing devoutly about Thee, and wishing above everything to see Thee again. Glad indeed were they when, during the meal, Thou didst come to them for their special

comfort. Whenever they came together for meals or friendly intercourse the first thing they did was to speak together about God, and the Kingdom of God, about peace and charity, about godly living and the salvation of souls. The care and thought they gave to the meat and drink to be set before them was less and only secondary. Having all things in common, they had no craving for special or dainty dishes. The community life of holy men is ample and sufficient; but those who wish to have things specially for themselves are seldom inwardly content, and lose the good that comes of having things in common.

Especially do I praise Thee, most exalted and everlasting King, for so lovingly sharing the life of those poor Apostles of Thine instead of choosing for thy companions kings and chief priests, and men rich in this world's goods. To such as these Thou and Thy disciples, whom Thou hadst chosen out of the world, and hadst kept from associating with evil men, were objects of hate.

Thanks then be to Thee for having before Thy Ascension into Heaven visited and encouraged Thy poor and faint-hearted disciples, who were being left to battle with the waves of this troublesome world. Thou didst reveal to them many heavenly secrets concerning things past and future, in order that, having been comforted by Thy words, they might not give way under the stress of the afflictions which they would have to endure for Thy Name's sake.

I praise and glorify Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Teacher more excellent than all Doctors of Divinity, for every word which, whether in plain or obscure language, Thou didst speak to Thy disciples and to the multitudes; for Thy many most beautiful

and deep parables; for thy simple teaching suited always to the capacity of thy hearers; for Thy true interpretation and clear exposition of the Divine utterances in the books of Moses and of the Prophets, who bore true witness to Thee, concerning all those holy works and glorious miracles which Thou didst work while dwelling amongst men, and didst command to be afterwards proclaimed throughout the world.

I praise, and with all the powers of my soul I bless Thee, O most loving Christ Jesus, eternal Shepherd, for Thy tender care of Thy poor and humble flock, surrounded as it was by wicked men, which on this day Thou didst visit and fill with joy and gladness in that Upper Room. After instructing them, and upbraiding them with the stubbornness of their unbelief, Thou didst lead them forth outside the walls of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, in order that they might behold with their own eyes Thy Ascension in all Thy Majesty into the glory of Thy Father in Heaven—fit consummation of Thy long pilgrimage upon earth, and of Thy work of righteousness and perfect obedience, now fully complete. There, then, in the presence also of Thy most holy Mother, of Mary Magdalene, and of the other women and disciples who were so dear to Thee, Thou didst once more, in the abundance of Thy love, speak to them profitable words concerning the Kingdom of God, contempt of the world, expectation of grace to be given them, and the coming to them of the Holy Ghost not many days after; restraining the while the over-curious questioning of some of them about the end of the world, a matter which was none of theirs.

Having spoken thus, having blessed them with

Thy sacred Hands, and having bidden them farewell, Thou wast taken up, by the Power of God, in Thy glorified Body, to the Heaven of Heavens, at whose threshold an innumerable company of saints and angels and of all the inhabitants of heaven (patriarchs and prophets and holy men of old, whom Thou hadst mightily delivered from the power of Hell and made to dwell for ever in a Paradise of delight) came forth to meet Thee, singing and rejoicing together with pipes and harps. Amid all these glorious and rejoicing crowds of holy ones Thou didst mount, joyfully, openly, mightily, and sublimely, to that kingly and highly exalted Throne in the Heavens, which from all eternity had of right been set apart for Thee alone.

I praise Thee, and from the bottom of my heart I thank Thee, Thou only begotten Son of God, for that heavenly and enduring blessing with which Thou didst bless Thy most holy Mother and all Thy holy Apostles and other disciples gathered together on the summit of the Mount of Olives. There didst Thou stand, and there, as it is reported, hast Thou left, for a memorial of Thy Name, holy footprints of Thy Feet impressed upon the soil.

Wherefore now upon my bended knees I adore, I praise, and I humbly worship Thee, my Lord, King of Glory, kissing the Holy Rood, and making the sign of the cross upon the earth or on the floor, in remembrance of Thy love, and for the comfort of my heart in this my exile here below. I rejoice with Thee, O my God, in all, and for all Thy Saints on account of the surpassing joy of this day's festival; for never before was the like seen or heard of in heaven or upon earth—man's nature raised to the Right Hand of the Father, in Majesty everlasting.

CHAPTER II

Of the appearance of Angels in white garments

I BLESS and praise Thee, O most sweet Jesus Christ, and on this holy day devoutly do I thank Thee for having (after Thy departure from the Apostles and Thy entrance with the Angels into Heaven) sent two Angels clad in white, messengers of the Court of Heaven, to comfort Thy bereaved ones who were looking up after Thee into Heaven, but were unable to follow Thee. "*Ye men of Galilee,*" they said to them, "*Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven?* Why marvel you at this astounding miracle, the like of which was never seen? With God all things are possible; God, made Man, has gone up with a shout, even as in the psalm it was foretold of Him. Be it yours therefore to carry the tidings, and to bear witness, to others, of the things which you have heard and seen, even as it was commanded you. *This Jesus Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven.* But He Who till now, in order that He might lead to the realms above those who humbly followed Him upon earth, here showed Himself to you as One meek and lowly, will then come in great power and glory to judge the living and the dead."

O my Jesus, Whom I love above all things, remember, I beseech Thee, in Thy glory, me, poor sinner that I am. Remember and have mercy on me, left a stranger and an exile in this vale of tears, mourning and weeping amid the many

temptations and troubles of this present life, which so often keep back my heart from thinking of the joys of Heaven. Draw me, then, after Thee, O most blessed Jesus, so that, unable as I am to follow Thee with my bodily feet, I may at least go after Thee in spirit, by the path of holy desire and burning love. All unworthy, all unable, as I am, to behold Thee in the unfathomableness of Thy Divine Majesty, give me grace to follow the example of humility which in Thy Human Nature Thou didst set me.

O blessed sight, to behold God face to face, as He is in Himself, as He is even now perfectly seen in Heaven by the Angels and all the Saints. And now I know of a truth that never can all my desires be satisfied or set at rest by any earthly good. That can only be when I am united to Thee, my God, in Heaven, and am purged from all that is evil. But for this it was that Thou didst go before me to the Father, to prepare the way and a place where I may dwell with Thee; and to obtain for me, by the scars of Thy Wounds, the pardon of my sins, that so I may have great confidence before Thee, both in this life and in that which is to come, by reason of the abundance of Thy mercies, the all-sufficiency of Thy merits, and the assistance of the prayers of all the Saints and Angels.

Ah, good Jesus, forsake me not! Thou Who in the power of Thy might hast wrought great marvels, Thou art my love, and that which my soul longs for; Thou art my Saviour and Redeemer, my hope from my youth up, my expectation, and that in which I place all my trust even unto old age. Thanking Thee from the bottom of my heart for all Thy benefits, I will, with all Thy

Saints, love Thee and praise Thee above all things, all the days of my pilgrimage and of my exile here on earth.

And now, O my soul, go back with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with His Apostles, from the Mount of Olives to the City of Jerusalem, there to seek peace of heart and rest from all the cares of the world. Go up with them to that large Upper Room, where the Passover of the old Law was superseded by the institution of the adorable Sacrament of the Body of Christ, there ordained and given to the Apostles. Recollect thyself therefore; remain quietly alone and in silence; wait upon God in prayers and devout meditation, and so prepare thyself, against the approaching feast of Pentecost, for receiving, as did the Apostles, with a fervent heart the Holy Spirit of God. They took no thought of earthly comfort, but awaited, in the privacy of that Upper Room, the new pledge of love to be sent by Christ from Heaven. Call to mind meanwhile the good gifts of God from the beginning of the world until now, and chiefly occupy thyself in conferring with the Blessed Virgin Mary about the Incarnation of Christ: think over all the sayings and doings of Jesus her Son, as recorded in the Gospels, from the day of His Birth to the day of His Glorious Ascension to the Father; and remember that even then He did not abandon His Mother who was so dear to Him, but specially left her to be the comforter of the faint-hearted, and to confirm in the faith the Apostles and the rest of the faithful; for she it was who knew more fully and more exactly than anyone else the works and the miracles which Jesus had wrought upon earth.

CHAPTER III

Of the sending of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples of Christ at the Feast of Pentecost

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, kind Comforter of the sorrowful, most sweet Visitor of the sick, most powerful Helper of those in trouble, for Thy true and faithful promise of Divine gifts to be sent down from Thy Home in Heaven, and from the Father of Lights. I thank Thee for Thy inestimable bounty, and for the wondrous outpouring of the multiform grace of the Holy Spirit upon Thy disciples gathered together in Jerusalem. They were assembled in the Upper Room, praying and waiting anxiously for the consolation of the Holy Ghost from Heaven: they were not thinking about the things of this life; but, like devout monks dwelling apart from the tumult of the world, in quietude and silence, they had cast all earthly cares out of their minds, and with their hearts fixed upon those joys which last for ever, they were preparing themselves by fervent prayer for receiving yet fuller gifts of grace.

I praise and glorify Thee, O most glorious Jesus Christ, King of the Holy Angels, for the right joyous festival of this day, and for the benediction and hallowing year by year by the Priest (in the power of the Holy Ghost) of the sacred Font, in which those who are baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity are cleansed from all their sins, become partakers of everlasting life, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit are made meet to be

accounted heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, and fellow-citizens of the Angels.

I praise and glorify Thee for having adorned this most holy day with many miracles and signs and gifts, and for having commanded it to be for ever observed by the faithful with joyous devotion. It was on this day that in old time the Law was given by Moses upon Mount Sinai to Thy people Israel, when they had been delivered from the heavy yoke of bondage, and had come forth from the land of Egypt to sacrifice to Thee in the Wilderness, where Thou gavest them for food sweet manna from Heaven. And it was for the perpetual remembrance of this deliverance that Thou didst command a special sacrifice of thanksgiving to be year by year offered to Thee of the newly gathered fruits of the harvest.

But now, under the New Covenant, after Thou hadst with great power ascended into Heaven far above all Angels, Thou didst with yet fuller grace and bounty distinguish, bless, and consecrate this holy day; and in place of sweet manna Thou didst send, by a visible sign from Heaven, the Holy Ghost upon Thy Apostles—with a loud noise, fiery tongues appearing upon each of them—in order that inwardly they might be inflamed with love, and outwardly might be ready and eloquent of speech, so as boldly to proclaim, as the Holy Spirit inspired them and gave them utterance, all the mighty works which in the land of the Jews Thou hadst wrought for our Salvation. Very many indeed were they, and such as to men were impossible; but to God all things are possible and easy. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the famous Prophet Isaias, saying: "*The law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the*

Lord from Jerusalem." Never before had such marvels been heard of as those of this day, when all at once so many faithful men and women received the Holy Ghost by a visible sign, that is, by tongues of fire; prophesied so that all could understand; interpreted Holy Scripture, and spoke the languages of all nations; when men unversed in books or letters were, in the school of God, at once and perfectly instructed by the Holy Ghost, and besides receiving so much knowledge, were also made illustrious by working many miracles and prodigies.

How wondrous and beyond description is the power of the Holy Spirit! He makes all whom He visits, and into whom He enters, zealous and learned, humble and devout, joyous and strong. Learning comes at once where the Holy Spirit is the inward Teacher, revealing the secret things of God even to babes, as seems to Him expedient for their salvation and for the good of others. Especially does He teach His own disciples and secret friends to despise the world, not to set their minds on high things, but ever to condescend to things that are lowly; to think meanly of themselves; to avoid distractions; to take count of their faults and to bewail them; to amend speedily, and humbly and unreservedly to confess, whatever is on their conscience and disturbs them, as being contrary to the working of the Holy Ghost, and so needing confession, no matter how small or trivial a thing men may think it to be.

CHAPTER IV

A Prayer of thanksgiving to Christ for His Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost with a fuller bestowal of gifts

O MOST sweet Lord Jesus Christ, Who desirest my everlasting Salvation, I, a man poor and weak, and undeserving of any comfort or any good thing, would bless Thee; and, together with Thy Saints and Thy Elect, would glorify for ever Thy most Holy Name.

Chiefly do I thank Thee for having, of Thy great love and pity, willed to become man for me, to take my nature upon Thee, outside the course of nature to be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and to be miraculously born of Mary, a pure Virgin; to be suckled and nourished; to be circumcised; and to be presented in the Temple, in order that Thou mightest cleanse me from every impurity of mind and body, and mightest teach me to live soberly, righteously and chastely all my days.

Still more, and every day and hour of my life, do I thank Thee for Thy most holy and most bitter Passion; for it was for me that Thou didst vouchsafe to suffer, to be crucified, to die and to be buried, in order that by Thy sinless Death Thou mightest deliver me from everlasting death, and mightest by Thy example strengthen me to be patient under adversity.

Further, with a heart full of joy, do I thank Thee for having, for my consolation, risen on the third day from the Tomb, and given great joy to Thy disciples by appearing to them in the Upper

Room when the doors were shut; doing this that I may not despair in any tribulation of my own, or when any harm or danger befalls me, but may trust in Thee for deliverance from my present trouble, and may have a sure hope of being at the last day raised by Thee, together with Thy elect, to everlasting life.

Yet again do I most devoutly thank Thee, rejoicing with them, not only with my lips, but from the bottom of my heart, for that august procession of Thine to Bethania, and for Thy glorious Ascension into Heaven, in the presence of Thy holy Mother, and of others Thy disciples. Thou didst go before to prepare for me a place with Thee; and to open to me by Thy Passion and Thy Cross the gate of the Kingdom of Heaven, where with the Angels Thou now livest and reignest in the everlasting glory of Thy Father, until such time as Thou shalt return at the end of the world to judge both the living and the dead. This it was which was taught us by the two holy Angels clothed in white garments (a symbol of the joy of this sacred Feast) who at that time appeared to Thy disciples, as they were looking up after Thee to heaven. Oh how blessed were the eyes which were found worthy to behold Thee in the Flesh; and how blessed were the ears which heard Thee speaking of the Kingdom of God, than which nothing can be found more delightful to hear about, nothing more blessed to enjoy!

It was for me that Thou didst ascend into the highest Heavens, above the Angels in their serried ranks, to that place where dwell those blessed ones who even now reign with Thee in Thy excellent Glory. Thou didst thither ascend, in order

that all my hope might be set on things above, and might be lifted up to Thee, instead of being fixed on things earthly, and seeking its delight in them. Apart from God there is nothing which is not empty and transient, worthless and of no account. Everything which keeps me back from God, and stands in the way of devout prayer and meditation upon heavenly things, is to be spurned and put aside.

I beseech Thee, therefore, O most loving Jesus, King of everlasting glory, that in the Kingdom of Thy Father Thou wouldst remember me, the least of all Thy servants, and wouldst send to me now from Heaven the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, to be my true Comforter, and to give me renewed zeal and a larger outpouring of spiritual gifts. Amen.

CHAPTER V

Prayer concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost against divers diseases of the soul

COME, O Holy Spirit, come with all Thy gifts, and drive far from me Satan, who with his vile imaginations so often harasses me in my prayers and devout meditations. Come, Thou most sweet South wind, blow through the garden of my heart with the hottest fire of Thy love, and root out from it every fleshly lust, that so, moistened with a shower of tears of true contrition for my sins, the spices of my thankfulness may flow forth at the sweet remembrance of all Thy mercies and favours. Come Thou, of Comforters the best, and lift me out of the abyss of black despondency by shedding

upon me the glow of inward joy, and giving me the hope of everlasting rest after my present short-lived care. Help me to overcome weariness of mind by speaking to me in hymns and psalms. Give me, O God, the shield of patience as a defence against feelings of anger. As a cure for the swellings of pride inspire me with the fear of death and of Hell; for who is there that can help fearing the power of Thy wrath, and that punishment which lasts for ever? Keep me from vaingloriousness by making me to realize my own weaknesses and the strong points of others. Make me to shun idle gossip by teaching me to keep silence. Keep me from wanton laughter by making me sad, and drawing tears from my eyes; for it is better to weep bitterly than to laugh about nothing. When my eyes are curious and wandering, bring before them the image of Jesus crucified for me. That I may not care for fine clothes make me to think of the loathsomeness of worms. As a cure for the lusts of the flesh open to my view the graves of the dead. Cure me of the love of wine by setting before me the gall and vinegar of Christ. Instead of the idle rumours of the world make me to hear words of God. Against long stories close my ears, so that poison may not find a hole to get in at.

To keep me from going about in the shops and streets, bind my hands and my feet with the chain of the fear of Thee, that I may not fall into divers temptations. Keep me from despondency and from feeling weary of my life by the grace of Thy holy unction. Keep me from being suspicious of others by teaching me to esteem my neighbour better than myself. Give me grace to submit to wrong done to me, and to abstain from taking re-

venge for it, lest in Heaven I should lose the crown of glory promised to those who suffer persecution. As a remedy for the various diseases of my soul give me the healing potions of Thy virtues, and the flowers of holy Doctors. Give me grace to overcome evil habits by curbing, for the sake of everlasting life, my natural impulses. When I find my work press heavily upon me, enable me to regain my peace of mind by devout prayer. When everything seems to be going wrong with me, keep me, O Holy Spirit, Thou present help in trouble, from losing heart by giving me a sure trust in Thee, in Thy surpassing love, and in the merits of the Saints. Amen.

CHAPTER VI

A prayer concerning the cheerful praise of the Angels in Heaven, and for obtaining the grace of devotion in the Divine Office

O HOLY Spirit, the Paraclete, of all teachers the wisest, of all physicians the most perfect, with one word and in a single moment Thou canst make the ignorant wise, and canst perfectly heal all infirmities whether of body or of soul. Mercifully assist me, I beseech Thee, everywhere and always; and in my prayers, in my meditations, and when I am singing or reading, graciously pour into my heart the spirit of true devotion, so that I may be able to say my Hours, as I should wish, with devotion and attention; for without Thee all prayer must be fruitless and unworthy of being heard by God, and without Thee I can do no good thing

Whereinsoever, therefore, I fall short by reason of my infirmity, do Thou supply for me by Thy grace. Against the terrors of the night, and the temptations of the devil, grant me the gift of faith, and defend me with the sign of the Holy Cross as with an impregnable shield, that the cruel enemy, who here and everywhere lays snares for my soul, may not prevail against me. When I weary of the long night vigils, or of the Lessons, longer perhaps than usual, give me grace to remember how great are the rewards in heaven which I have now a chance of gaining. When the days of abstinence from food and drink are many, give me the power to fast, and good health to enable me to carry on my work; give me pardon for the sins which I have committed, keep me from falling into them again, relieve me from the punishment they have deserved, and give me a good hope of everlasting happiness with the elect in the Kingdom of God. When I am dull and lazy during the recital of the Divine Office, rouse me by the words of David inspired by the Holy Ghost, sung to the music of psaltery and harp; and disclose to me the manna which underlies the dry letter of the words, and the precious spices which are stored in a casket of small account. Many secret things, rightly hidden from the lazy and the inattentive, are plainly to be seen by him who prays devoutly and meditates thoughtfully. If at Matins I am drowsy, pluck me smartly by the ear, that I may lose no time in waking to hear what the Lord would say to me in the Holy Scripture which is being read, and in the hymns and canticles which are being sung; that so my heart may be lifted up to my God in Heaven, and I may forget those things which are being done on earth.

Keep me from a sluggish habit of body, and open the ear of my heart, that so with my mind as in a trance I may be permitted by Thy all-sufficient help, to behold the secret things of Heaven, and to hear the voices of the holy Angels devoutly hymning and praising God seated upon the Throne of the Majesty on high. Oh that I were one of them in Heaven, and could join them in their song of, "*Holy, Holy, Holy!*" They never tire, they never cease to sing their Maker's praise; and because they are full of the Holy Ghost they are on fire with love, they glitter like snow in its whiteness, they give forth sweet scent like spices, their chant is joyful, smooth and sweet. They intone evenly; they join in heartily; they keep time; they sing with voices full of love; the joy on their countenances is pleasant to behold; they are, as it were, beside themselves in God.

Who could grow weary or fall asleep in choir, if he kept constantly in mind the blessed and exceeding joy of the Angels in Heaven? Who would not be kept wide awake by the resonance of those celestial organs, and the harmony of those numberless musicians, singing as with one voice, "Holy, Holy, Holy, for ever and ever, world without end"? And when the very doors of heaven shake upon their hinges with the ringing shout of Angels, shall worms of earth be silent? When the very stones of the heavenly temple cry aloud, and the nine celestial Orders shout to God for joy, shall monks and nuns fall asleep? Even the sun and moon serve God by giving forth their light, and will ye sleep? God forbid! "*Awake, ye just,*" says blessed Paul, "*and sin not.*" Be ashamed, then, of falling asleep, of being lazy; let there be no hurry, no discord, but with all reverence and

devotion stand in your places and sing to the glory of God; offer with one accord the sacrifices of joyous shouts of thankfulness. The praise of joyful lips is well-pleasing to God, provided that, for the outward part, the voices are as one, and for the inward part, the minds are pure and attentive. That which at a feast gives most pleasure, that which to a musical entertainment gives most sweetness, is harmony of voice, cheerfulness of countenance, and honesty of life.

How delightful and how sacred is that Congregation wherein the Holy Ghost is present as Master, and among the brethren are found love in the heart, truth on the lips, dutifulness in the work, and peace everywhere; no dissimulation, no fear of being deceived. Such an one is a perfect brotherhood, one which can never be disturbed by quarrels, can never be discouraged in its work, can never be overcome by misfortune, "*because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*"; and He is given to the humble, to the contrite, to the needy, to the gentle, to the peace-makers, and to those who, whether by day or by night, are ready for every good work and the praise of God. These are the works of the Holy Ghost, Who to this day worketh in his faithful ones many good works, "*dividing to every one according as He will;*" if only they prepare themselves for receiving His grace, and keep diligent watch over their hearts in every thought and act. A great and arduous task it is to keep the heart from wandering in prayer, and to fix the mind upon God in meditation. But though our spirit often plays us false, is led astray of evil, and inclines to vanity; yet the Holy Ghost comes back to us, reproves our heart, makes it contrite,

wounds it, anoints it, and heals it. He Himself teaches us, and He enlightens us; He humbles us by our daily shortcomings; He raises us up again by inward consolations: He waters our heart by frequent prayer, and cleanses it by bitter groanings.

O God the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, the Ruler, and the Guardian of the faithful; Absolver of sinners, Restorer of innocence, and Comforter of the sorrowful; O merciful and gracious Lord Paraclete, most loving Comforter of the faint-hearted, ever, I beseech Thee, turn that which is evil in me into good, and that which is good into that which is better; turn my mourning into joy; my wandering feet into the right path; my ignorance into knowledge of the truth; my luke-warmness into zeal; my fear into love; all my material good into a spiritual gift; all my earthly desires into heavenly; all that is transient into that which lasts for ever; everything human into that which is Divine; everything created and finite into that sovereign, infinite, and immeasurable Good, Which Thou Thyself art, O my God, and my Saviour.

O my God, my true and everlasting Salvation, keep me, I pray Thee, from present wrong-doing; forgive me that which is past; and deliver me from the perils which may beset me in the time to come, by a large outpouring upon me of the grace of the Holy Spirit, which on this day Thou didst shed forth into the hearts of the Apostles, blessing them abundantly, and sending them forth to preach Thy Word among all nations. Amen.

CHAPTER VII

Of the preaching of the Apostles, and the spreading of the most Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout the world, for the Salvation of men

I BLESS Thee, and give thanks to Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, most highly exalted Son of God, Blessed for ever above all the Saints, because on this day, when the Holy Spirit, Whom Thou hadst sent into the world, had come visibly in the form of fire, the hearts of the faithful were invisibly so inflamed with the love and praise of Thy Holy Name, that without delay that Holy Name, exalted by the Father far above all holy names, was fearlessly and publicly preached, praised, spread abroad, and magnified by Thy blessed Apostles; was openly proclaimed before all the people in Jerusalem, and among all nations; and went on from day to day being more and more exalted, honoured, and adored.

And then, as the number of the disciples increased, so great devotion and brotherly love was kindled among the faithful, that they were one in the belief of their minds and in the kindliness of their actions. True love for God made them all of one heart and soul; none of them sought his own things but those of Jesus Christ; and in the holy primitive Church, gathered together in the Holy Ghost, all property was held in common. So great also was the joy, peace, and concord among them that no one said that anything which he possessed was his own, but every one was glad

to have all things in common for God's sake, and to distribute to those who were in need. This holy and heavenly mode of life was learnt in the first instance by the holy Apostles from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; thereafter they were careful to observe it; and they continued so to do throughout their lives, which they ended by dying for the Faith of Jesus Christ.

I praise and bless Thee, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God, together with Thy Only-begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, for all Thy benefits and spiritual gifts, which of old Thou didst bestow upon Thy chosen friends, and upon the holy Patriarchs and Prophets. Long ages since, Thou didst reveal to them through the Holy Ghost, both by words and by signs, the secret things of Thy Wisdom, and the judgements of Thy Mouth, and chiefly the mystery of Thy Incarnation. But after Thy coming, O loving Jesus, Thou didst fulfil and make plain in Thy Own Life many of the hidden things of Scripture, and didst expound others of them more fully—still, however, lovingly postponing till after the mission of the Holy Ghost those things which mere babes in Christ were not able to receive. And further—what is still more wonderful and praiseworthy—Thou didst of a sudden inflame with the fire of the Holy Ghost the untutored minds of the Apostles, and didst perfectly instruct the hearts of those whom Thou hadst drawn away from earthly vanities, and who were devoted to Thee; making them wiser than the wise of this world, and giving them strength to convert the whole world.

I praise and glorify Thee, most illustrious Jesus Christ, Enlightener and Restorer of the entire human race, for the conversion and gathering to-

gether of much people, belonging to many nations and speaking divers tongues, whom Thou hast brought out of various parts of the world into the unity of the Catholic faith and of the Apostles' Doctrine, causing them to join in praising Thy most sweet and Holy Name in hymns and psalms and spiritual songs (thus most devoutly celebrating this sacred festival of the Holy Ghost) in all places and churches, and in convents of Religious of all the different Orders. At this great festival, in the hearing of the common people, and of princes and nobles, are recited in Church the many wonderful things which were done in days of old—works which from the beginning of the world were wrought upon earth by the Holy Ghost for the salvation of those who believe, and which He will never cease to work until the day of judgement shall come: for "*if God be for us, who is against us?*" And so it is that in the psalm the Holy Ghost exhorts all the faithful, saying: "*In the Churches bless ye God the Lord, from the fountains of Israel. There is Benjamin, a youth, in ecstasy of mind,*" beholding, that is to say, the things of Heaven, and forsaking all things that are earthly.

Blessed are those servants whose feet are swift to join in praising God; who rejoice in taking part with the Angels in blessing His Holy Name. Blessed are they who despise the things that are without, and turn with all their heart to God; that so they may receive the grace of the Holy Spirit, and may be enabled to overcome all carnal affections, and to resist their ghostly enemy; for greater and stronger for good are the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, than is the power of the wicked one for evil.

O most good and loving Jesus, I bless and praise

Thee for the abundant grace and wisdom which Thou didst bestow upon Thy Apostles, thus enabling them to preach Thy Word boldly before all the dwellers in Jerusalem and Samaria, and even unto the ends of the earth; and especially do I bless and praise Thee for Thy gift of constancy and singleness of heart, which kept them steadfast in the faith in spite of persecution from city to city, and caused them to rejoice in suffering reproach for Thy Name's sake, in being thrown into prison, in being scourged, in being tormented with hunger, in having to undergo punishment of many kinds. All these things seemed to them small and of no account in comparison with the crown of everlasting Life, and the greatness of the glory which were laid up for them, even as blessed Paul says: "*The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.*"

Which glory, O most loving Jesus, Son of the Living God, of Thy most tender mercy, by the immeasurable grace of the Holy Spirit, and through the glorious intercessions of all Thy Saints (which are so pleasing to Thee), after the sad and perilous struggles of this my present life are ended, to me do Thou vouchsafe to grant—

Who livest and reignest with the Father and the same Holy Spirit, God in Three Persons, One in Essence, Co-equal in Glory, for ever and ever, world without end. Amen.

THE END

CHISWICK PRESS: PRINTED BY CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

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